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A

TREATISE

ON

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL.

WRITTEN IN SPANISH

BY THE REV. EUSEBIUS NIEREMBERG,
OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

PHILADELPHIA :

PUBLISHED BY EUGENE CUMMISKEY,
130 South Sixth Street.

1833.

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THE
FIRST BOOK

OF THE

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TEMPORAL AND
ETERNAL.

CHAPTER I.

*Our Ignorance of what are the true Goods ; and not only of Things
Eternal, but Temporal.*

To use things aright, we ought first to know their value and estimation ; and we cannot give them their true value, unless we know their nature, and what they are ; which knowledge is in this world so short and imperfect, that it passes not beyond worldly things, nor enters into the consideration of things heavenly and eternal, for which we were created. And it is no wonder, that in matters of eternity, being so far removed from our senses, we know so little, since we are ignorant even in temporal things, which we see, and daily touch with our hands. How can we comprehend the things of the other world, when we know not those of this wherein we are ? And even to that stupidity can human ignorance arrive, that we know not what we presume to be best acquainted with, the riches, commodities, honors and goods of this world, with which mortal men so much converse, and which they so much covet ; for they covet them because they know them not.

Good reason had St. Peter when he taught St. Clement the Roman (Clem. Rom. in Epist.) that the world was like a house filled with smoke, wherein nothing could be seen, either within or without, the smoke hindering the distinct sight of both. After the same manner it happens to those who live in this world ; they neither know what is without it, nor what within it ; they neither know the greatness of what is eternal, nor the baseness of what is temporal ; and being ignorant of both, for want of knowledge mistake their value, giving what is due to one, to the other ; making that small account of things heavenly and eternal, which they

ought to do of things fading and transitory ; judging so contrary to truth, that, as St. Gregory remarks (Lib. 8. moral. c. 12), they take the banishment of this life for their home, the darkness of human wisdom for light, and this wandering peregrination here for their rest and abode ; all which proceeds from ignorance of the truth, and the small consideration of what is eternal ; in such manner as they qualify what is good with the name of bad, and what is bad with the name of good ; by reason of which confusion in human judgment, David asked of the Lord, that he would give him a master who might instruct him, which is the true good ; saying, " Who shall teach us what is good ?"

The world is, therefore, ignorant of all things, even of its own proper goods, which it most enjoys ; it faring with us as it did with the children of Israel, who having manna in their sight, and holding it in their hands, yet knew it not, but demanded, " What is this ?" But to us even that curiosity is wanting ; we inquire not so much as what these riches are, for which mortal man hazards so many dangers of death ; what the honors are, for which men's hearts burst with envy and ambition ; what the pleasures are, for which we endanger our health, and often lose our lives ; what the goods of the earth are, which are only enjoyed during our pilgrimage in the exile of this life, and are to vanish at the entrance of the other, as the manna did at the entrance of the Land of Promise. With reason did Christ our Redeemer, in the Apocalypse, call it the hidden manna, because the Hebrews, holding it in their hands, knew not what it was : even so are the things of this life hidden from our understandings, which, although we touch, we know not ; and so confounding their value, do that for things temporal, which we ought to do only for the eternal ; undervaluing these for the esteem of those, which for themselves are worthy to be despised and contemned.

Hence, failing in the knowledge of things, we fail in their estimation, and consequently in their use. That which happens in this, may likewise be seen in those who eat the manna ; for in them it caused a loathing, and procured vomit ; to others it tasted pleasantly, and like the meat they most desired : so great a difference is there between the good and ill use of things ; and the good use of all depends upon their knowledge.

Let mortal men, therefore, awake and open their eyes, and let them know the difference between what is temporal and eternal, that they may give to every thing its due estimation ; despising that which time makes an end of, and esteeming that which eternity preserves ; which they ought to seek during this life, and by those momentary things purchase the eternal, to which they cannot attain without the knowledge both of the one and the other ; because, aiming at the eternal as that of greatest value, they conserve the temporal, although of itself of no worth, and

that which is corruptible and transitory, they render firm and durable.

The manna which our Lord gave to the Hebrews, whilst they wandered in the desert, and was to serve them until their arrival in the Land of Promise, amongst other mysterious significations which it contained, one was to be a symbol of the blessings which we enjoy in the peregrination of this life, until we come to the promised land of eternal happiness. For this cause it putrified and corrupted suddenly, lasting but a very short time, as all things of this world do; only that part of the manna, which was gathered with intention to keep for the sabbath, which was a figure of glory, or to preserve in the ark to be carried into the Land of Promise, corrupted not; insomuch as gathering the same thing with different respects, made that, which in itself was corruptible, to be of a condition eternal, as is well noted by Baldwin (Bald. apud Tibra. in Exod. 15), an ancient doctor, and a most learned interpreter of the Holy Scripture. So much it imports to have our intentions elevated and placed upon eternity, as by the use of temporal and transitory things we may gain eternal, converting small things into great, mutable into immutable, and mortal into immortal.

Some philosophers, who considered better the things of this life, although without attention to the eternal, found in them many defects, which the most wise emperor and philosopher, Aurelius Antoninus (*In vita sua*), reduced to three, to wit, that they are little, mutable and corruptible, even until they arrive to their end; all which we shall find represented to the life in manna. The littleness of it was such, saith the Holy Scripture, that it was small, like that which is brayed in a mortar, and reduced into powder; the mutability was so notable, that carrying it from the field where it was gathered into their tents, if they brought a quintal (*Vi. Bonfrerium* in Exod. 16), it shrunk and contracted itself into the small measure of a gomer; with some it diminished, and with others swelled and dilated itself into a greater proportion. The corruption of it was so sudden, that it lasted not one day without being putrified and filled with worms; and yet, notwithstanding all these qualities, the enjoying and eating of it cost much toil and labor, first in gathering, then in grinding, then in cooking, and performing many other duties requisite for the use of it. After the same manner, the goods of this life, notwithstanding all their faults and evil conditions, are not obtained, nor enjoyed, without much travel and vexation. After this, all did not enjoy that quality proper to the manna, which was to taste like unto that, which he that ate it most desired; for sinners found this taste limited, and not so full and savory as others. Even so we, with our vices, alter and diminish the natural sweetness of the things of this life, as we shall see hereafter in its due place.

It is true that the appearance of it was good, as the 70 interpreters say (Sept. interp. in cap. 11. Numb. Species illius specie chrystalli), it was like crystal, clear and transparent. The same is the condition of the goods of this life; they have the splendor and an appearance, but are really more brittle than glass; they are variable, fading and inconstant, and subject to a thousand alterations; they are corruptible, transitory and mortal, and only by reason of their glittering we seek after them, as after things great and eternal.

Let us leave the appearance and painted superficies of things, and look upon their substance and truth, and we shall find, that what is temporal is small, and what is eternal is great; the temporal inconstant, the eternal firm; the temporal short and temporal, the eternal durable, and, in fine, eternal. This alone were enough to make it more esteemed than the temporal, although the temporal, in all other respects, did exceed it; but the one being so short and mutable, and the other great, firm and constant, the difference between them can be no less, than as St. Gregory esteemed it (Lib. 7. moral. c. 12), who says, "Immense is that which shall follow without limit, and little is all that which ends" The same saint notes, that the small knowledge and memory of eternity is the main cause of the deceiving of mankind, who have in esteem the false goods of this life, and undervalue spiritual and eternal of the other; and, therefore, speaks in this manner (Lib. 8. moral. c. 12. Magna cogitatio): "The thoughts of the predestinated always have their intentions placed upon eternity; although they possess great felicity in this life, and although they be not in danger of death, yet ever look upon it as present. The contrary do obstinate souls, who love this temporary life, as a thing permanent, because they consider not how great is the eternity of that which is to come; and not considering the solidity of the eternal, they judge this banishment for their country, this darkness for light, and this race for their station; for those who know not greater matters, are not able to judge of the smallest." We, therefore, will begin to draw the curtain, and from the consideration of eternity, and the loose condition of time, discover the distance between the goods of heaven and those of earth; from whence we shall come to treat of the baseness of the temporal, and the greatness of the eternal. For, as a philosopher said of light, that there was nothing more clear, and nothing more obscure; the same may be said of time and eternity, which, being held no less perspicuous, are ill understood, and are no less obscure and dark than the other. But we shall endeavor to make them more intelligible, being assisted by the light of faith, the doctrine of saints, and wisdom of philosophers.

CHAPTER II.

How efficacious is the consideration of Eternity for the change of our Lives.

THE thought of eternity St. Augustine (Augus. in Psal. 76) calls a great thought, because the memory of it is of great joy to the saints, and no less horror to sinners, and to both of much profit and concern: it causes us to do great matters, and shows the smallness of the fading and transitory things of this earth. I will, therefore, from this light begin to discover the large field of the poverty, deceit and baseness of the temporal, and recommend the consideration of the eternal, which we ought still to have in our thoughts, as David had perpetually in his; in whom, whilst he was a sinner, it caused horror and confusion, and being a saint, it comforted and encouraged him to be yet more holy; drawing from this meditation most spiritual and incomparable profit to his soul; and, therefore, in his Psalms, he so often repeats the memory of it, not only in the body of them, but almost in every passage, saying, *for ever*, or *eternally*, or, *world without end*: there being no inscription or title which he uses more frequently than this, *against the end*, or *in the end*, because he composed them with the consideration of eternity, which follows the end of this life; and for more clearness adds in some of them, *against the end*, *for the Octave*; which, according to St. Augustine, signifies eternity, that being the Octave, after the seven days of the week, into which all time is to be resolved; which seven days being past, there are to be no more weeks, but, as St. Peter says, one only day of perpetual eternity.

In this eternity, therefore, did the prophet employ his thoughts by day, and his meditations by night; this forced him to send up his voice to heaven, and to cry out to God; this made him mute, and took away his speech with men; this astonished him, and made his pulse fail with the consideration of it; this affrighted him, and mingled wormword with the pleasures of this life; this made him know the littleness of all that is temporal, and made him enter into himself, and examine his conscience: finally, this brought him to a most miraculous change of life, beginning to serve the Lord with more fervor; all which effects, proceeding from the thoughts of eternity, are apparent in the 76th Psalm; therefore says he, amongst other things, "Mine eyes prevented the watches; I troubled myself and spake not:" immediately after he gives the reason, saying, "I thought upon the days of old, and had in my thoughts the years of eternity, and meditated on them by night with my heart." This thought was the occasion of his long watches; on this he meditated before the sun

was risen, and on this many hours after it was set, and that with so great astonishment of what eternity was, that, as himself affirms, his spirit failed him, and he trembled with the lively apprehension of what it was, either to perish eternally in hell, or to enjoy a blessedness for ever in heaven. And it is no wonder that this great thought of eternity should make so holy a king tremble, when, as the prophet Habacuc says, the highest hills of the world bow down and quake at the ways of eternity. The holy youth Josaphat (Damas. in vita ejus), at the representation of eternity, hell being placed on one side, and heaven on the other, remained astonished and without strength, not being able to raise himself in his bed, as if he had been afflicted with some mortal sickness.

The philosophers, more barbarous, and who had less light, were yet daunted with the thought of it, and in their symbols make choice of things of the greatest terror to express it; some painted it in the form of a basilisk, a serpent the most terrible of all others, who kills with only his sight; there being nothing of more horror, than that eternity of torments whereinto we are subject to fall. Conformable to this, St. John Damascen represented eternal duration under the figure of a fierce dragon, which from a deep pit lay waiting with open jaws to swallow men alive. Others figured it by a horrible and profound cavern, which at the entrance had four degrees, one of iron, another of brass, the third of silver, and the last of gold, upon which many little children of different sexes and ages stood playing and passing away the time, without regarding the danger of falling into that bottomless dungeon. This shadow they framed not only to set forth how worthy eternity was of their fear and amazement, but also to express their amazement at the folly of men, who laugh and entertain themselves with the things of this life, without remembering that they are to die, and may then fall into the bottomless abyss of hell; those children who are playing at the entrance of that dismal cave, being no other than men in this life, whose employments are but those of children, and who, being so near their death, and therefore to eternity which succeeds it, have neither fear nor care to leave the pleasures and vain entertainments of this world. Truly it is a thing of great amazement, that, being in expectation of two such extremes, as eternal glory, and torments without end, we live as if there were neither. The reason is, because men set not themselves seriously to consider what eternity is, which is, either hell, whilst God is God, or glory without end. For this cause it is, that they remain as settled and obstinate in their fading pleasures, as if they were immortal; which was signified by these degrees of such hard metals. But in David, who seriously meditated and framed a lively conception what the eternity of years was, it caused so great a fear, and so awaked his spirits with care and diligence, that it produced in

him an extraordinary change of life, that he said with great resolution within himself, *Now I begin. This is a change from the right hand of the Most High.* "Now I begin," as Dionysius explains it (Comment. in Psal. 76), "to live spiritually, to understand wisely, to know truly, perceiving the vanity of this present world, and felicity of the future, reputing as nothing all my past life, and all the progress I have hitherto made in perfection. I will henceforth seriously take to heart with a new purpose, a new fervor, and a more vehement endeavor, the paths of a better life, and entering the way of spiritual profit, begin every day afresh." And because he knew his heart to be so much changed, he confessed his resolution to be miraculous, saying, *This change is from the hand of the Most High*; as if he had said, according to the same Dionysius, to have in this sort changed me out of the darkness of ignorance into the splendor of wisdom, from vices to virtues, from a carnal man to a spiritual, is only to be attributed to the aid and most merciful assistance of God, who, by the knowledge of eternity, hath given so notable a conversion to my heart. This great thought of eternity doth mightily enlighten the understanding, and gives us a true and perfect knowledge of things as they are. For this cause, in the title of some of the Psalms which David made with this consideration, as we have already said, he added the word (Psalm 6) *understanding, or for the understanding*; that is, to give understanding to those who meditate upon the end of this life, and the eternity of the other, and therefore despise the goods of the world.

By the experience of what happened to his own soul, the prophet exhorts all men, that they meditate with quietness and leisure upon the eternity of the two so opposite conditions which hereafter expect them, that they may not only run, but fly to it with profit, and suffer with patience all the difficulty which attends on virtue; and, therefore, with great mystery promises, on the part of God, to those who shall sleep between the two lots—that is, to those who, in the quietness of prayer, shall meditate on the eternity of glory and of hell—that there shall be granted to them the silver wings of the dove (a bird of the swiftest flight), and her shoulders of gold, because the spiritual life consists not only in the actions of our own good works, but also in the patient suffering the evil works of others; in lifting up ourselves from the dirt of this earth and flying towards heaven, by performing heroical and precious acts of virtue, and not yielding to the troubles and afflictions of this life which oppress us. All which is, by a lively conception of eternity, effected with great merit and perfection; and for this reason did the prophet express it by the similitude of those things which men esteem the most precious, as of gold and silver. But because to suffer is commonly more difficult than to do, and consequently more meritorious, although

both be very precious, for this cause he said, that the shoulders should be of gold and the wings of silver. This also did the patriarch Jacob hold for so singular a good, that he gave it to his son Isachar for a blessing, telling him that he should lie down between the two borders; that is, that he should at leisure meditate upon the two extremes of happiness or misery eternal. For this reason he calls him a strong beast, as having the strength of mind to overcome the difficulty of virtue, to support the troubles and burthens of this life, to suffer the scorns and disgraces of the world, to undergo great penances and mortifications, by considering the two eternal extremes which attend us.

And not only amongst saints, but amongst the philosophers, did the quiet and calm consideration of eternity produce a great love and desire of things eternal, and as great contempt of all which was temporal, even without looking upon those two so different extremes, which the Christian religion proposes to us. Seneca complained much, that he was interrupted in the meditation of eternity, in which he was wholly absorbed, his senses suspended, and tied up as it were in a sweet sleep, by the content which he received from that consideration. "I delighted myself (says he), amongst other things, to inquire into the eternity of souls, and believing it as a thing assuredly true, I delivered up myself wholly to so great a hope, and I was now weary of myself and despised all that remained of age, though with perfect and entire health, that I might pass into that immense time, and into the consideration of an eternal world." So much could the consideration of eternity work in this philosopher, that it made him despise the most precious of temporal things, which is life. Certainly, among Christians it ought to produce a greater effect, since they not only know that they are to live eternally, but that they are either to rejoice, or suffer eternally, according to their works and life.

CHAPTER III.

The Memory of Eternity is of itself more efficacious than that of Death.

It is, therefore, of much importance for us to frame a lively conception of eternity, and having once framed it, to retain it in continual memory, which of itself is more efficacious than that of death; for, although both the one and the other are very profitable, yet that of eternity is far more generous, strong and fruitful of good works; for by it virgins have preserved their purity, anchores performed their austere penances, and martyrs suffered their torments, who were not comforted and encouraged in their

pains by the fear of death, but by the holy reverence and hope of eternity, and the love of God. It is true, the philosophers, who hoped not for the immortality of the other life, as we do, yet, with the memory of death, retired of themselves from the vanity of the world, despised its greatness, composed their actions, and ordered their lives according to the rules of reason and virtue. Epictetus advises us always to have death in our minds: "Thou shalt never, says he (Epict. c. 23. apud S. Hier. in cap. 10. Matth.), have base and low thoughts, nor desire any thing with trouble and anxiety." And Plato said, that by so much man were to be esteemed wiser, by how much he more seriously thought of death; and for this reason he commanded his disciples, that when they went any journey, they should go barefoot; signifying thereby, that in the way of this life, we should always have the end of it discovered, which is death, and the end of all things. But Christians, who believe the other life, are to add to this contemplation of death, the memory of eternity; the advantages whereof are as far above it, as things eternal above those which are temporal. The philosophers were so much moved with the apprehension of death, because with it all things of this mortal life were to end; death being the limit whereunto they might enjoy their riches, honors and delights, and no further: others desired to die, because their evils and afflictions were to die with them. If, then, death amaze some, only because it deprives them of the goods of this life, which, by a thousand other ways use to fail, and which of themselves, even before the death of the owner, are corruptible, dangerous and full of cares: and if others hope for death, only because it frees them from the evils of life, which in themselves are short and little, as all temporal things are; why should not we be moved by the thought of eternity, which secures us goods great and everlasting, and threatens us with evils excessive and without end? Without doubt, then, if we rightly conceive of eternity, the memory of it is much more powerful than that of death; and if of these wise men have had so great an esteem, and advised others to have the same, much more ought to be had of that of eternity. Zeno, desirous to know an efficacious means how to compose his life, bridle his carnal appetites, and observe the laws of virtue, had recourse to the oracle; which remitted him to the memory of death; saying, "Go to the dead; consult with them, and there thou shalt learn what thou demandest." There, seeing the dead possess nothing of what they had, and that with their lives they had breathed out all vanity, he might learn not to be puffed up with pride, nor to be the vanities of the world. For the same cause, some philosophers used to drink in the skulls of dead men, that they might keep in continual memory that they were to die, and were not to enjoy the pleasures of this life, although necessary, unless

alloyed by some such sad remembrance. In like manner, many great monarchs used it as an antidote against the blandishments of fortune, that their lives might not be corrupted by their too great prosperity. Philip, king of Macedonia, commanded a page to tell him three times every morning, *Philip, thou art a man*; putting him in mind that he was to die, and leave all. The emperor Maximilian I., four years before he died, commanded his coffin to be made, which he carried along with him, whithersoever he went, which, with a mute voice, might tell him, as it were, "Maximilian, thou art to die, and leave all." The emperors also of the East, amongst other ensigns of majesty, carried in their left hand a book with leaves of gold, which they called *Innocency*, full of earth and dust, in signification of human mortality, and to put them in mind hereby of that ancient doom of mankind, "Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." And not without much conveniency was this memorial of death in the form of a book, nothing being of more instruction and learning, than the memory of death, being the only school of that great truth: its being of gold, and carried in the left hand, being that next the heart, had also its mystery; for it was to give us to understand, how precious this disabuse is, and that we ought to stamp and imprint it in our hearts, where we may best learn to undeceive ourselves. With reason also was the book called *Innocency*: for who will dare to sin, that knows he is to die? Neither were the emperors of the Abyssinians (Nichol. Gog. lib. 1. de rebus Abiss. cap. 8) careless herein; for at their coronations, amongst many other ceremonies, were brought to them a vessel filled with earth, and a dead man's skull; advertising them, in the beginning, that their reign was to have a speedy end. Finally, all philosophers agreed in this, that all their philosophy was the meditation of death.

But, without doubt, the contemplation of eternity is far beyond all philosophy; it is a greater matter, and of far more astonishment, for the torments of hell to last for ever, than for the greatest empires suddenly to have an end; more horrible to suffer eternal evils, than to be deprived of temporal goods; greater wonder that our souls are immortal, than that our bodies are to die. Wherefore Christians, especially those who aim to be perfect, are rather to endeavor to raise in themselves a strong conception of eternity, than to stir up the fear of death, whose memory ought not to be needful for the contempt of what is temporal, since the first step to Christian perfection (according to the counsel of Christ) is to renounce all that we possess of the earth, that, being so freed from those impediments of Christian perfection, we may employ ourselves in the consideration and memory of that eternity which expects us hereafter, as a reward of our holy works and exercises of virtue. This awful voice, *eternity, eternity*, is to sound often in our hearts. Thou not only art to die, but, being dead, eternity

attends thee. Remember there is a hell without end, and fix it in thy memory, that there is a glory for ever. This consideration, that if thou shalt observe the law of God, thou shalt be eternally rewarded, and if thou break it, thou shalt suffer pains without end, will be far more powerful with thee, than to know that the goods and evils of this life are to end in death. Be mindful, therefore, of eternity, and resound in the inmost part of thy soul, *eternity, eternity*. For this the church, when it consecrates the fathers of it; which are bishops, puts them in mind of this most powerful and efficacious memory of eternity, bidding them think of eternal years, as David did. And in the assumption and consecration of popes, they burn before their eyes a small quantity of flax, with these words: "Holy father, so passes away the glory of the world;" that, by the sight of that short and transitory blaze, he may call to mind the eternal flames. And Martin the Fifth took for his device a flaming fire, which in a short time burnt and consumed a pope's tiara, an imperial diadem, a regal crown, and a cardinal's hat; to give them to understand, that if they complied not with the duties of their places, they were in a short time to burn in the eternal flames of hell; the memory whereof he would preserve ever present by this most profitable symbol.

SECTION II.

The name of Isachar, whose blessing from his father was (as we have formerly said) to lie down and rest between the two limits of eternity, signifies him *That hath a memory*, or *The man of reward or pay*; the Holy Ghost, by this mystery, charging us with the memory of eternal rewards. And the Lord, to show how precious it was in his divine esteem, and how profitable for us, caused this name of Isachar to be engraven in a precious amethyst, which was one of those stones worn by the high-priest in the rational, and one of those also revealed unto St. John, to be of the foundation of the city of God. By it, says St. Anselm, is signified the memory of eternity, which is the principal foundation in the building of all perfection. Truly, if we consider the properties of this stone, they are so many marks and properties of the memory of eternity, and of the benefits which that soul reaps, which seriously considers it. The amethyst (Albert. Mag. Milius et Ruiz. v. Cesium de Min. lib. 4. p. 2. cap. 14. sect. 11) causes vigilance. And what requires it more than the passage between the two extremes of eternal glory and eternal pains? What thing in the world ought to awake us more, than the danger of falling into hell-fire? How could that man sleep, who were to pass over a narrow plank of half a foot broad, which served as a bridge between two high rocks, the winds impetuously blowing, and he, if his foot slipped, certain to fall into a vast abyss? No less is

the danger of this life. The way by which we are to pass to heaven is straight, the winds of temptations violent, the dangers of occasions frequent, the harms by ill example infectious, and the deceits of wicked counsellors very many. How, then, can a Christian sleep, and be careless in so evident a peril? Without doubt, it is more difficult to be saved, considering the depravity of our nature and the deceitful ambushes of the devil, than for a heavy man to pass over a heady and rapid river, upon a small and bruised reed.

They say also of the amethyst, that, besides the making him watchful who carries it, it frees him from evil thoughts; which how can that man have, who bears eternity in his mind? How can he think upon the short pleasures of his senses, who considers the eternal torments due to his soul, if he shall but consent to the least mortal sin? The amethyst also resists drunkenness, preserving him that wears it in his senses and judgment; and there is nothing that more preserves a man's judgment in the midst of the wine of delights in this life, than the memory of the other, and that for the pleasure of one moment here, he is not only to suffer for hours, for days, for months, for years, but for worlds, and a world of worlds hereafter. The amethyst, besides this, preserves the wearer from the force of poison. And what greater antidote against the poison of sin, than to remember hell which he deserves, and heaven which he loses by committing it? The amethyst also quiets a man, and settles his thoughts. And what can be more efficacious to free us from the disturbance of this life, to bridle the insolence of covetousness, to repress the aspiring of ambition, than to consider the blessings of eternity, which attend the humble and poor in spirit? Finally, the amethyst confers fruitfulness; and this great thought of eternity is fruitful of holy works. For who is he that considers with a lively faith, that, for a thing so slight and momentary, he may enjoy the reward of eternal glory, and will not be animated to work all he is able, and to endure and suffer what shall happen for God Almighty and his cause? O how fruitful of heroical works is this holy thought, *Eternal glory expects me!* The triumphs of martyrs, the victories of virgins, the mortifications of confessors, are the effects of this consideration. O holy thought! O precious amethyst, that makes vigilant and attentive the negligent and careless; that gives wisdom and judgment to the most deceived; that heals those who are most ulcerated, and corrupted with the poison of sin; that quiets and pacifies the motions and troubles of our concupiscences; that makes the most tepid and barren of virtues fruitful of holy works—who will not endeavor to obtain and fix thee in his soul? O that Christians would so engrave thee in their heart, that thou mightest never be blotted out, nor removed from thence! How differently would they then live to what they now

do! how would they shine in their works! For though the memory of hell, heaven, death and judgment be very efficacious for the reformation of our lives, yet this of eternity is like the quintessence of them all, and virtually contains the rest.

CHAPTER IV.

The State of Men in this Life, and their miserable Forgetfulness of Eternity.

BEFORE we come to declare the conditions of eternity, whose consideration is so necessary for leading a holy and a virtuous life, let us set before our eyes the forgetfulness and miserable mistakes of the sons of Adam, in a matter of so great importance, living as if eternity were far off, when, as the philosopher says, it is not two fingers distant, and every minute threatens them. What divides the mariner from his death, but the thickness of a plank? What the choleric and hasty man from eternity, but the edge of a sword? What the soldier from his end, but the reach of the bullet? What the thief from the gallows, but the distance between that and the prison? Finally, how far is the most healthful and vigorous person distant from eternity, but as much as from life to death, which often happens suddenly, and ought every moment to be expected? The life of man is a dangerous passage, wherein he walks upon the brink of eternity, with a certainty at last to fall into it. Why lives he, then, so wretchedly? He who should walk close to a great precipice, in a path no broader than the breadth of his foot, and that also full of rubs and stumbling-blocks, how circumspectly would he look about him, and how carefully would he order his steps! How then is it, that, being so near eternity, he is so careless, and lives as if he were out of danger?

St. John Damascen excellently declares (In Hist. Barla. c. 12. in fine) the fondness and mistakes of men in a most ingenious parable, wherein he naturally sets forth the state of this life. A certain man, says he, flying from a furious unicorn, which, with his very roaring, made the mountains tremble, and the valleys resound, not regarding, through fear, which way he went, chanced to fall into a deep pit; but in his fall spreading abroad his arms to catch at something, which might relieve him, happened to light upon the boughs of a tree, that grew out of the side of that pit, on which he seized with much joy, hoping he had then both escaped the fury of the beast, and the danger of his fall; but looking towards the foot of the tree, he perceived two great rats, the one white, the other black, perpetually gnawing the root of

it, insomuch that it was now ready to fall; looking afterwards into the bottom of the pit, he beheld a most deformed dragon, with flaming eyes gazing upon him, and with open mouth awaiting his fall, that he might devour him; then casting his eyes upon that side of the pit where the tree grew, there appeared four poisonous asps, shooting forth their heads to bite him mortally. Yet, notwithstanding, marking the leaves of the tree, he perceived some of them to distil certain drops of honey, with which he was so greatly pleased, that, forgetting the dangers, which, from so many parts, threatened him, he employed himself wholly in gathering and tasting, drop by drop, that small quantity of honey, without reflecting or making further account either of the fierceness of the unicorn above him, of the horribleness of the dragon beneath him, of the poison of the asps beside him, or the weakness of the tree, which was ready to fall, and precipitate him into that horrid dungeon. In this image we see represented the state of man, who, forgetful of the manifold perils of this transitory life, gives himself wholly over to vain pleasures. For, by the unicorn is signified death, which, even from the hour of man's birth, follows and pursues him; the pit is the world, full of evils and miseries; the tree is the course of this life; the two rats, the one black, the other white, which gnaw it at the root, are day and night, which, continually seconding one another, go by hours and minutes consuming it; the four asps are the four elements, or four humors, of which we are composed, which, by the excess of any one of them, distemper the whole frame of our bodies, and at last destroy it; that horrid and fearful dragon is the eternity of hell, which enlarges his throat and jaws to swallow sinners; the small drops of honey are the pleasures and delights of this life; and so great is the diversion which they cause, that men, for a short and momentary content, consider not the many dangers to which they are exposed; and seeing themselves encompassed on all parts by as many dangers of death, as there are ways and causes of dying, which are infinite, and are so many mouths and gates of eternity, yet, notwithstanding, solace themselves with the momentary delights of this small drop of honey, which shall at last cause them to disgorge and cast up their entrails for a world without end.

Wonderful it is, that so great a forgetfulness possesses us, and a matter full of amazement, that we are not moved with so great dangers. How comes it to pass, that, every minute a new day of eternity dawning upon us, we carelessly pass over so many days and months? Let the most strong and healthful person tell me, what one year he is assured of, wherein death may not assault him, and push him headlong into an eternal abyss. But what speak I of a year? what month, what week, day, hour, what instant is he sure of? how then can we eat? how sleep in safety? how indulge ourselves with any pleasures of this world? If one

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should enter into a field full of ambushes and secret traps, whereon, if he should chance to set his careless foot, he were in danger to fall upon the points of spikes and halberts, or into the mouth of some terrible dragon, and seeing with his own eyes, that they, who entered with him into the same field, hourly fell into those traps, and appeared no more, should, notwithstanding, run leaping and dancing up and down, without fear or apprehension of any thing amiss, who would not say that man were a fool? Certainly more fool art thou, who, seeing thy friends fall daily into the trap of death, thy neighbor swallowed up in eternity, thy brother sink into the pit of the grave, dost yet, notwithstanding, remain careless and secure, as if the same fate did not attend thyself. Although to die were a thing uncertain, yet, for the doubt and danger that it might happen, thou oughtest to be vigilant, and prepared for it. What oughtest thou then to be, it being so certain, and that, early or late, thou art to enter in at the gate of eternity? A marvellous thing it is, with what care men provide themselves against dangers, although very uncertain. If they hear that thieves are in the way to rob and spoil the passengers, no man passes that way but armed, and well provided, and many in company: if they understand that the plague begins to rage, what antidotes and counterpests are sought for? if they fear a famine, every man in time provides himself with corn. How happens it then, that, knowing that there is a death, a judgment, a hell, an eternity, we stand not upon our guard, nor provide ourselves for it? Let us open our eyes, and look into the perils which environ us; let us take heed where we set our feet, that we perish not; for the paths of this life are full of dangers. And with reason did Isidorus Clarius (Isid. Clar. et juxt. S. Greg.) compare it to a narrow bridge, scarce broad enough to receive our feet, under which was a lake of black and filthy water, full of serpents, and of ugly and poisonous creatures, which only sustained themselves by feeding on those unfortunate people, who fell from the bridge; on either side were pleasant gardens, meadows, fountains, and beautiful buildings. But as it were extreme madness in him, who was to pass so dangerous a bridge, to entertain himself with gazing upon those gardens and buildings, without taking care where he set his foot; so it is as great a folly in him, who is to pass this transitory life, to apply himself to pleasures and delights, without taking care of his way or works. To this Cæsarius Arelatensis adds, that the greatest danger of this bridge consisted towards the end, where it was narrowest; and this is the most straight passage of death. Let us, therefore, if we intend to gain heaven, look how we place our feet in this life, lest we misplace them in death, and perish in that eternity, wherein our life is to conclude. O eternity, eternity, how few there are that provide for thee! O eternity! peril of perils, and danger (if we miss the mark, wherewith we

ought to aim) above all dangers, whence comes it that we prepare not for thee? why do not mortals think of thee and fear thee? There is no peril greater than that of eternity, no danger more certain than that of death; why then do we not arm ourselves and prepare for them? whence comes it that we fear thee not, which art to endure as long as God is God? This present life is but to last a very little time; our forces will fail us, our senses wax dull, our riches leave us, the commodities of the world fly from us, the want of breath make an end of us, and the world at last casts us out of it; what then will become of us? We are to be sent into a strange country for a long time; why do we not forecast what to do when we come thither?

But that we may the better see this our condition, and so learn to be more cautious, I will relate another parable of the same St. John Damascen. (In vita Joseph.) There was, says he, a city very great and populous, whereof the inhabitants had a custom to elect for their king a stranger, who had no knowledge of that kingdom and commonwealth. This king for a year they suffered to do what he pleased; but that being ended, and he most secure, without fear or apprehension of any thing amiss, thinking he should reign as long as he lived, they suddenly came upon him, despoiled him of his royal apparel, dragging him naked through the streets, and banishing him into an island far off, where he came to suffer extreme poverty, not having wherewith to feed or clothe himself; his fortune, without thinking on it, wholly changed into the contrary, his riches into poverty, his joy into sadness, his dainties into hunger, and his royal purple into nakedness. But once it happened, that he whom they elected, was a prudent and subtle man, and having understood from one of his counsellors, this evil and wicked custom of the citizens, and their notable inconstancy, grew not proud and haughty with the dignity of the kingdom, which they had conferred upon him, but became careful in providing for himself, that when he should be deposed and banished into that island, which he every moment expected, he might not, as his predecessors, perish with poverty and hunger. The course he took was, during his reign to transport secretly into that island all the treasures of the city, which were very great. The year being ended, the citizens, according to their custom with his predecessors, came in an uproar to depose him from his office and royalty, and to send him in exile into that island; whither he went without trouble, having beforehand provided wherewith he might live in honor and plenty, whilst the preceding kings perished with want and penury. This is what passes in the world, and the course which a wise man ought to take. That city signifies this world, foolish, vain and most inconstant; wherein, when we think to reign, we are suddenly despoiled of all we have, and sent naked into our graves, when we least look for

it, and are most busy in enjoying and entertaining ourselves with the fading and transitory pleasures of this life, as if we were immortal, without so much as thinking on eternity, whither we are in a short time to be banished ; a region far off, and far removed from our thoughts, whither we are to go naked, and forsaken by all, where we are to perish with an eternal death, and shall only live to be tormented ; into a land of the dead, obscure and dark, where no light enters, but everlasting horror and eternal sorrow inhabit. He is, therefore, wise, who, foreseeing that he is to be despoiled of all he has in this world, provides for the next, making such use of time in this life, that he may find the profit of it in eternity, and with the holy works of penance, charity and alms, transports his treasures into that region, where he is to dwell for ever. Let us, therefore, think upon the eternal, and for it despise the temporal, and we shall gain both the one and the other.

The consideration of eternity St. Gregory understood to be figured by the store-house well furnished with precious wine, into which the spouse says, that the bridegroom brought her, and in her ordinary charity ; because, says he, who shall with a profound attention consider in his mind eternity, may glory in himself, saying, "He hath ordained in me charity ;" by which thought he shall better preserve the order of love, loving himself the less, and God and all things for God the more ; he shall not make use of the temporal things of this life, not even of those which are most necessary, but in order to the eternal.

CHAPTER V.

What Eternity is, according to St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. Dionysius.

LET us, therefore, begin to declare something of what is inexplicable, and to frame some kind of conception of what is incomprehensible, whereby Christians, knowing, or (to speak more properly) being less ignorant of what eternity is, may have a horror either to commit a sin, or to omit an act of virtue ; trembling in themselves, that for matters of so small value, as are those of the earth, they are to lose things so great and precious, as are those of heaven. Agrippina perceiving the great profuseness of her son, who poured out gold and silver, as if it had been water, desirous to reform his prodigality, upon a time when the emperor had commanded about a quarter of a million to be bestowed upon some minion of his, caused as much more to be spread upon a table, and placed where he was to pass, to the end that, seeing with his own eyes the mighty mass of treasure, which he so

wastefully misspent, he might after, with more discretion, moderate his vast expenses. Truly, the folly and vanity of man admits no other cure, than to set before his eyes, that for the small and momentary pleasures of a sin, committed against the law of God, he loses and unthriftilly casts away that which is to last for ever. For this cause we ought to consider, what it is to have no end, what it is to last for ever, what it is to be eternal. But who is able to declare this? for eternity is an immense ocean, whose bottom cannot be found; a most obscure abyss, wherein are sunk all the faculties of human understanding; an intricate labyrinth, out of which there is no issue; a perpetual present, without what was, or what shall be; a continual circle, whose centre is in every part, and circumference no where; a great year, which ever begins, and is never ended; finally, that which never can be comprehended, yet ever ought to be pondered and thought upon. But that we may say something, and frame some conception of it, let us see in what manner the saints have defined it. St. Gregory Nazianzen knows not what it is, but only what it is not; and therefore says, *Eternity is not time, nor part of time*; because time, and each part of time, pass away, but in eternity nothing does nor ever shall pass. All the torments with which a soul enters into hell, shall, after millions of years past, torment him as lively and entirely, as at the first beginning; neither shall the joys with which the just enter into heaven, ever in the least sort diminish. Time has the property to draw along with it custom, which at length lessens the sense of what at first was grievous; but eternity is ever the same, ever entire; in it nothing passes; the pains with which the damned begin, shall, after a thousand ages, be the same they were at first; and the glory which he, who is saved, receives in the first instant, shall ever appear fresh and new to him. Eternity hath no parts; all is of a piece; in it there is no diminution nor lessening. And though the pleasures of this life, which go along with time, are of this condition, that in time they lessen, and that there is no delight in this world, which by long enjoying becomes not troublesome and tedious; and that, on the contrary, even griefs and pains with continuance, either grow less, or are absolutely cured; yet far otherwise is the web which eternity weaves; it is all uniform; in it there is no joy which wearies us, nor any pain which, by continuance, abates or becomes less sensible; insomuch as eternity, according to St. Dionysius Areopagita, (Cap. 10. de Divin. Nomin.) is the immutability, immortality and incorruptibility of a thing wholly and altogether existent; a space which perishes not, but is always subsistent after the same manner; and, therefore, as the wise man says, "Wherever the tree falls, there it shall for ever remain;" if thou shalt fall as an infernal firebrand into the bottom of hell, there thou shalt be for ever burning whilst God is God;

it not being in the power of any to redeem thee thence, nor in thy own so much as to turn from one side to the other.

Eternity is immutable, because incompatible with change; it is immortal, because not capable of end; and incorruptible, because it cannot suffer diminution. The evils of this life, how desperate of remedy soever, yet want not this comfort, that they are either eased with change, or ended by death, or lessened by corruption. But all this is wanting in eternal evils. The change of pains serves for a refreshment, and the infirm man, how afflicted soever, by turning from side to side receives some ease; but eternal pain shall, whilst God is God, remain in the same posture, force and vigor, without change at all. If the most pleasant and wholesome food of manna, only because continual, caused vomiting, and became loathsome, what shall those pains do, which shall last for ever? what torments shall they cause, since they are to remain still after the same manner? The sea hath its ebbs and flows, the rivers their increases, the planets their various aspects, the year its four seasons, the greatest fevers have their relaxations, and the sharpest pain arriving at the height uses to decrease; only eternal torments shall never suffer declination, nor shall the eyes of the damned ever see a change. The plain and even way, which seems most easy, wearies the traveller, because it wants variety. What weariness shall then the ways of eternity cause, and those perpetual pains, which can neither change, end nor diminish? The torments, whereinto Cain entered, now five thousand years ago, are, after so many ages past, still the same they were at first; and what they now are, shall for so many ages more to come: they are measured by the eternity of God, and the duration of his unhappiness, by the duration of the divine glory; whilst God lives, he shall wrestle with death, and shall immortally continue dying: that eternal death still living, and that miserable life still dying, containing the worst of life, and the worst of death; those wretched souls living only, that they may suffer torments, and dying, that they may not enjoy comfort; having neither the content of life, nor the end of death; but contrary, for their greater torment, have the pain of death, and duration of life. On the other part, behold the happy lot of those that die in grace; their glory shall be immortal, without fear of ending; their happiness immutable, without capacity of growing old; their crown incorruptible, without danger of withering; where no day shall pass without joy, whose content shall be ever new, and whose glory flourishes for perpetual eternities, and whose happiness shall ever be the same. And that very glory, which St. Michael was six thousand years ago possessed of, the same he enjoys this very instant, as fresh and new as at the first, and, for six millions of years to come, will be as new as now.

CHAPTER VI.

What Eternity is, according to Boetius and Plotinus.

LET us now hear the opinion of Severinus Boetius and Plotinus, two great philosophers, and the one of them no less a divine, what they conceive concerning this great mystery and secret of eternity. Boetius defines eternity to be (Lib. 5. de consol. Philosoph.) "A total and perfect possession of an interminable life;" which definition, although it principally belongs to the eternity of God, yet it may be also applied to the eternity of reasonable creatures; since they also enjoy a total and perfect possession of happiness in an eternal life, never to end. With reason he calls it a possession, for the fulness it has of joy; possession being the best way of enjoying, which implies a full dominion of what it possesses; for he who hath a thing in loan or trust, may be said to enjoy it, but not with that liberty, as he who possesses it. He says, moreover, that this possession is total, because it is of all goods and blessings, without missing of any one, and all of them at once; it not being necessary for the enjoying of them, to have them one after another, but all together. The goods and blessings of this life have not this condition; for although one were master of them all, yet he could not enjoy them all at once, but successively; some passing away, and others succeeding in their place. The emperor Heliogabalus, who most desired and most endeavored to enjoy them; for all the diligence and haste he used, was hardly possessed of three or four at once; for whilst he was in his banquets, he could not attend his masques and dances; whilst he was in these, he enjoyed not the pleasures of the shows and spectacles of the amphitheatre; whilst he was present at them, he could not apply himself to hunting and sports of the field; and whilst so employed, he could not satiate himself in lust and sensuality. Finally, to enjoy one, he must of necessity quit the other; insomuch as he could neither enjoy all pleasures, those wanting which were enjoyed by others; and of those, which he might enjoy himself, but few at a time. But to the just in heaven no blessings or contents are missing, no succession needful for their enjoying; the blessed possessing them all, and all together.

The possession of this happiness is also perfect, in respect of the security it has, nothing being of force to disquiet it, no one to go to law about it, none to steal it, none to disturb it; and is likewise perfect, because complete; not like the goods of the earth, which cannot be enjoyed entirely; for either the distance of the place, the imperfection of the sensible organ, the mixture of some grief or care, or at least the multitude of objects, and their own opposition, distract the perfect fruition of them. But eternal

happiness is by the blessed, in its full extension, perfectly possessed, the joy of it entirely relished, and the essence and sweetness of it wholly penetrated and imbibed into the essence of the soul, which no mixture of pain, no surprise of grief, no incapacity of the subject, no distance of position, no greatness of the object, can hinder; for grief and care have there no place; the subject is elevated above its nature, the object accommodated, and the eternal pleasure and delight of it not proportioned by space and distance. Wherefore Plotinus likewise said (En. 1. lib. 7. c. 1.), that eternity was "a life full, and all at once:" because in it all that has life shall be full and complete; the senses, with the whole capacity of the soul, shall be replenished with all happiness and delight, there being no part of life in man, which shall not be full of sweetness, joy and content. The life of the hearing shall be full, with the concert of most harmonious music; the life of the smell shall be full, with the fragrances of most sweet odors; the life of the eyes shall be full, feeding themselves with all beauty; the life of the understanding shall be full, with the knowledge of the Creator; and the life of the will shall be full, in loving, rejoicing and delighting itself in him. Temporal life is not capable of this fulness and satisfaction; even in small matters, the attention of one sense hinders that of another, and the attention of the body that of the spirit. This life cannot be here enjoyed but by parts, and that also not completely; but in that eternal felicity, the life shall be full, the possession total, and the joy perfect, where all is to live, which here can die, where neither the impassibility of the objects, nor the impediment of the senses, nor the incapacity of the soul, shall hinder us from enjoying all blessings, together with all our senses, and all our powers jointly. Besides, all this possession, which is so total, so perfect, and so full, is for life without death, a space without limit, a day eternal, which is equivalent to all days, and includes all years, embraces all ages, and excels all times; because in it nothing passes, nor any good of it ever shall pass.

The contrary it is with those wretched sinners, whose eternal miseries have the same condition of evil, which the eternity of the blessed has of good; to whom their evil shall not be extrinsic, but in full possession of them, and they shall remain in their torments with all their soul, body, powers and senses. This is called possession, which is acquired by a corporal and real presence. These then unfortunate sinners are to continue in their torments, with all they have of being, not as in a thing lent or distant from them, but as in a thing so proper, as it can, by no possibility, be parted or separated from them, nothing being more proper and due, than punishment is to sin. Wherefore, all evils shall take possession of all that they are; their senses, their members, the joints of their bodies, the powers of their soul, their

most spiritual faculties, shall be possessed by fire, bitterness, grief, rage, despite, misery and malediction. This possession of those unfortunate creatures shall be total, because of all evils; for no evil can be wanting where there is a concourse and meeting of all torments and unhappiness. In the taste there shall not want bitterness, in the appetite hunger, in the tongue thirst, in the sight horror, in the hearing astonishment, in the smell stink, in the heart pain, in the imagination fear, in every member grief, and in the very entrails fire.

All evils, therefore, are to possess the damned, and all totally; their torments being so many, that if they were to suffer them one after another, many years would not suffice to finish them. And this only were sufficient to make their condition most terrible. But above all their unhappiness, this is the greatest, that they are to suffer them all at once. The pain in one part of the body is not to hope it should cease in another; the grief of the spirit is not to expect that the fire which burns the flesh should have an end; all evils are to set upon them at once, and all at one moment are to fall upon the heads of the damned. The continuance of one little drop hollows a stone; and to ruin the world it was enough for God to rain forty days. What shall it then be, when his divine justice shall rain fire, sulphur and tempest upon the heads of the damned, not for forty days, but whilst God is God? Besides all this, they shall not only be possessed by all the evils, and all jointly at once, but by all of them fully in their whole force and vigor. The sense of them shall not grow less by their multitude, nor dull by their greatness, but shall remain as quick and lively to them all, and they shall be as sensible of the rigor of each one of them, as if they suffered but one only: for the fire shall not only penetrate their bones, heart and entrails, but the fury of it shall search into the very soul, and burn that with immortal flames. The possession of its misery shall be whole, it shall be perfect, it shall be full: whole, because it shall suffer all sorts of evils; perfect, because it shall suffer them wholly: and full, because it shall suffer in all the senses, and in all the faculties that are, capable of suffering. This state and life where we now are, is not to last, or, to speak more properly, this death is not to live; but, in the damned, their death shall live as long as God shall have life, and their miseries shall endure as long as God shall have glory.

CHAPTER VII.

Wherein is declared what Eternity is, according to St. Bernard.

ST. BERNARD (Serm. 1. in festo Omn. Sanct.), in another manner, describes eternity, saying, "It is that which embraces all times past, present and to come;" because no days, no years, no ages are able to fill up eternity: it is that which devours all times possible and imaginable, and yet remains with an insatiable appetite, still greedy of swallowing more. It is said to embrace all time, because it enjoys all that in an instant which is to be enjoyed in all time. Wherefore, Marsilius Ficinus called eternity "an eternal moment;" and Lessius said, "it was both the longest and shortest of all things." It was longest, because it exceeded all time, and lasted infinite spaces; it was shortest, because it contained all that in an instant, which it was capable of containing in an infinite duration. For as time is a fluid instant, which flies and passes away, insomuch as there is nothing of time in being but the present, which is ever running and changing from one moment to another; so eternity is a permanent instant, fixed and stable, in which all things remain at once, and are ever existent in the same state and manner: before it, all times pass, the one succeeding the other, whilst it stands present and perseveres the same to them all. Time and things temporal are like a rapid river, wherein the waves run rolling down, each succeeding the other in a perpetual vicissitude; but eternity is like a firm rock, or like the bed of that river, which remains settled and constant in the same place, whilst the waters pass through it, never to appear again. In the like manner things temporal, without permanency or consistency at all, pass hastily in the presence of eternity, and never more return to salute the world. And as the bed of the river, though standing still, contains all the waters which run through it, so eternity embraces all times which pass by it. Eternity may also be compared to the centre in a circle, which being indivisible, one corresponds to the whole circumference, and equally respects each particular point contained in it. In the same manner eternity corresponds to all time, and to each instant of it, after a most wonderful way, containing all that in present, which time contains successively in a million of ages, and is an instant equivalent to an infinity of times, not having any part after another, but the whole extension amassed in one instant, containing all that together in one moment, which is extensible to infinite distances of time. For as the immensity of God contains in one point all the divine greatness, which without bound or limit is dilated over all parts real and imaginable, insomuch as it contains in one point, as much as in a million of leagues; even so

eternity collects into one instant all the divine duration, although extended through an infinite time; which also the reasonable creatures are to participate in the other life, for as much as concerns their glory or pain, and after such a manner as they are capable of:

Whence follows one thing very much to be considered, that those goods to which eternity is annexed, it makes infinitely better, and that after two ways, and, as we may say, with two infinities; and contrariwise, the evil it makes infinitely worse, and that also after the same two ways; the first in respect of the duration which it confers, which is infinite; and every thing is to be esteemed so much the greater, by how much the duration is longer. The content of a day is not so great as that of a week, nor is that equal to the content of a month or year; and as the duration increases, so the value of the pleasure grows higher, insomuch as if it last infinitely, it is infinitely to be esteemed. In like manner, of pain, the longer it lasts the worse it is, and if it last infinitely, it becomes an infinite evil, which will infinitely exceed any temporal evil whatsoever, though more in greatness; and that in so high a degree, that if it should be left to one's choice, either to be thrown alive into a burning furnace, and at the same time to suffer all the infirmities and griefs which physic knows, and all the kinds of torments which martyrs have endured, and all the cruel punishments which have been executed upon the most heinous offender, and all this for the space of two hundred millions of years, but then to end and pass no further; or to suffer a megrim, or a tooth-ache for a whole eternity; certainly he ought rather to choose all those torments together for that time limited, than either of these single pains for ever: because, although those exceed this in greatness, yet this would infinitely exceed those in duration. In fine, if those, though excessive, were temporal, and this, though less, were eternal, which would infinitely increase the malice of it, there being hopes that these would at last find an end, but this were without remedy; I dare be bold to think, that the lively apprehensions of eternity, which the damned conceive, are such, that if it were in one's election, either to be exempted from all the torments he now endures, and to remain afflicted only with a painful disease for an eternity; or to have added to his own particular torments all those which the rest of the damned suffer in all their senses, but limited for a thousand millions of years, he would choose this last for the lesser evil; at least in reason he ought to choose it; for, although those pains were greater, yet they were to have an end, but this painful disease, though less, was to be eternal.

Let now those lovers and esteemers of transitory pleasures come to a reckoning with themselves. If the torments of hell, though so excessive, were sufferable; if they were only temporal, nay, to be

chosen rather than so slight a pain as the disease that was eternal; how happens it, that they will not suffer with patience one small pain during the short time of this life, in exchange of being freed from the eternal torments of hell-fire during the other? If a giant in time (that we may so speak) has no bulk or appearance in the presence of a pigmy in eternity, how comes it then that a dwarf or pigmy in time affrights us, and an armed giant in eternity makes us not tremble? How is it that eternal hell moves us not, and yet we fear a temporal pain? Why do we not penance for our sins? why have we not patience in our afflictions? why suffer we not all that which can be suffered in this life, rather than to suffer one only torment in eternity? The pains of this valley of tears, since they are to have an end, are not to be feared in comparison with those which shall never have it. How contentedly, then, ought we to suffer here a little, and for a short time, that we may be freed from suffering much hereafter, and for ever.

What we have considered in evils and afflictions, the same is to be considered in goods and blessings. If one were to enjoy all the pleasures of the senses for a thousand myriads of years, but were to pass no further, we ought to change them all for one only pleasure that would last for ever. Why then exchange we not one perishing pleasure of the earth, which is to last but for a moment, for all those immense joys which we are to possess in heaven for a world without end? All the temporal goods of the world might well be quitted for the securing of only one that were eternal; how is it, then, that we secure not all the eternal by forbearing now and then one which is temporal? It would infinitely exceed the dominion of the whole world, so long as the world shall last, to be lord but of one little cottage for eternity: time holds no comparison with it; all that is temporal, how great soever, being to be esteemed vile and base, and all that is eternal, how small soever, high and precious. And that we may exaggerate this consideration as much as possible, the very being of God himself, if it were but for a time, might be quitted for some other infinitely less excellent, which were eternal. And shall then the covetous man satisfy himself with these poor treasures, which death may take from him to-morrow, and perhaps the thief to-day, despising for them the eternal treasure of heaven? For certainly, if God should promise us to enjoy the pleasure of one only sense for ever in the next life, we ought for it to part with all the pleasures we have in this: how great a folly is it then, that, being promised all those immense joys of heaven, we will not, for all of them together, part with some of those poor ones on earth?

The second way, by which eternity, to whatsoever it is joined, makes the good infinitely better, and the bad infinitely worse, is because it collects itself wholly into every instant, so that in every

instant it makes us sensible of all that which it is to contain in its whole duration ; and, being to endure for an infinity, it amasses, as it were, into every instant a whole infinity of pleasure or pain, every instant being sensible both of what it contains at present, what is past, and what it shall contain in the future ; so as a doctor says (*Less. de perfec. divin. lib. 4. c. 3.*), "In eternity, all the good a thing can contain successively in an infinite time, is collected into one instant, and made perceptible and enjoyable all at once. As if all the pleasures a most delicious banquet could afford successively by parts, and that in an infinite time, should be resumed all at once, and all that delight should be conferred jointly and together for eternity, certainly this would make it infinitely better, and of more esteem."

The same thing, eternity, causes in evils and pains, collecting them in a certain manner into one, and making them sensible all at once ; and, although they be not all really and actually together, yet it causes them to be apprehended all together, and so produces in the soul a grief infinite and without limit. Those, then, are truly evils, which are totally and every way evils, both in extension, their duration having no end, and in intenseness, their being and essence having no limit or measure. What afflicted person, who considers this, can be impatient, since all the griefs of this life have both an end and limit ? The greatest temporal evils are but as biting of gnats, in respect of the least of those which are eternal ; and, therefore, that we may escape all the eternal, it is not much to suffer one temporal. Let us tremble at the consideration of those two lances of eternity, those two infinities, whose wounds are mortal, and pierce the damned from side to side : those two unsupportable rocks, which overwhelm and crush whom they fall upon into pieces. All that we suffer here is to be laughed at, as a fillip with a finger, and a trifle in respect of the eternal, which embraces all times, and, with the evils of them, all fall every instant upon the head of the damned.

SECTION II.

Besides what has been already said, goods and evils eternal have this condition, that they are not only qualified and augmented by the future, but also by what is past, although temporal ; so, as the blessed souls in heaven not only enjoy the glory which they have at present, and that which is to come, but also what is past, even those real and true goods of this life, to wit, their virtues and good works, with the memory of which they recreate and congratulate themselves for all eternity ; insomuch, as all goods, past, present and to come, concur in one to fill up the measure of their joy ; and the goods of all times, even those of this life, are amassed and heaped up in their felicity. How different

from this are temporal goods, since even those which we possess at present suffer not themselves to be entirely enjoyed? Here is no good which is not alloyed by some want, danger or imperfection. And if for the present they afford so little content, much less do they for the future; since the security of what we possess is so uncertain, that the fear of losing it often disseasons the present gust. The same fear also robs our remembrance of the comfort of what is past, since we fear to lose that most which we have formerly taken most pleasure in enjoying.

On all sides, then, the eternal goods are much more excellent, to which we ought to aspire, and strive to purchase them, even at the cost of all that is temporal, and in this life, as much as possible, to imitate the same eternity; which is to be done by the practice of those three virtues which St. Bernard (Serm. 1. in festo Omn. Sanct.) recommends to us in these words: "With poverty of spirit, with meekness, and contrition of heart, is renewed in the soul a similitude and image of that eternity which embraces all times. For, with poverty of spirit, we merit the future; with meekness we possess the present; and with the tears of repentance, recover what is past." And truly he, who esteems eternity, ought only to exercise himself in the practice of those three virtues: The first, by quitting with spiritual poverty all that is temporal, and changing it for the eternal, not setting his heart upon any thing in this life, that he may find it bettered in the other. For as eternity does infinitely augment that good or evil, to which it is annexed, so time diminishes and draws violently after it all that is annexed to it. Things, therefore, which are to finish, require not much to leave them, and those that are to end in nothing, are to be reputed for nothing. As for the second virtue, a Christian ought with patience and meekness to persist in doing well, and in overcoming the difficulties of virtue, since his slight troubles in this life are to be rewarded with eternal happiness in the other. All our sufferings in this life are regales, if compared to the sufferings of the other. Who, seeing hell open, and the abyss of its evils without bottom, would not bear with patience the rigor of penance, and with meekness suffer the impertinency of an injury, the interior peace of his soul not troubled at all, but attending wholly, even through fire and water, to live virtuously, and please his Redeemer? and who, looking upon heaven, which waits for him, will not be animated to do what is good cheerfully, and to suffer all crosses, for the Almighty's sake, with fervor and courage? Ruffinus (Ruffin. n. 107. & Pelag. libel. 7. n. 28.) relates, that a certain monk, coming to the abbot Aquilius, complained to him, that he found much trouble and tediousness in keeping in his cell; to whom the discreet abbot answered, "My son, this proceeds from not meditating on the

perpetual torments we are to fear, and upon the eternal joy and repose which we hope for. If thou shouldst but seriously think on that, though thy cell were filled and swarmed with worms and vermin, and thou stoodst up to the throat in the midst of them, yet wouldst thou persevere in thy retreat without weariness or trouble." The third virtue is, with tears and grief of soul, to endeavor a recompense for our past sins, and to satisfy for them with a dolorous contrition and bitterness of heart, that so the eternity of happiness, which by them was lost, may, with repentance, be regained; contrition being a virtue so potent, that it repairs what is ruined; and although it is said that what is done hath no remedy, and that there is no power over what is past, yet this most powerful virtue is able to undo what is done, and to prevail upon what is past, since it takes away our sins, and makes them as if they had never been committed.

CHAPTER VIII.

What it is in Eternity to have no End.

BUT all these definitions and declarations of eternity are not yet sufficient to express and truly set forth the greatness of it; neither is it well understood, as Plotinus notes what the authors, who define it, thought of it. That may be rather said, which was said by Simonides the philosopher, who, when Hieron king of Sicily (Cic. l. 2. de nat. deor.) entreated him to declare what thing God was, demanded a day's space to think before he gave his answer; which past, he said he had need of more time to consider it, and required other two days; at the end of those he asked four; which also ended, his answer was, that the more he thought upon it, the more he found he had to think, and knew less how to express it, and that the further he entered into the consideration of it, the more it hid and obscured itself from him. The same may be said of eternity, which is an abyss so profound, that human understanding finds no footing, but has still more to consider the more it ponders. St. Dionysius the Areopagite (De Myst. Theol.), speaking of God, confesses that it cannot be said what he is, but only what he is not, and beside what he is. In like manner, eternity cannot better be declared than by what it is not, and beside what it is. Eternity is not time, it is not space, it is not an age, it is not a million of ages; but it is more than time, space or millions of ages. The life wherein thou now art, and which must shortly have an end, is not eternity; the health which thou at present enjoyest is not eternal; thy pleasures and entertainments are not eternal; thy possessions, treasures, revenues are not eternal;

that wherein thou trustest is not eternal; the goods of this world, in which thou so much delightest, are not eternal: thou must leave them all. A far greater thing is eternity: above kingdoms, above empires, and above all felicities. Whereupon Lactantius (Lact. de falsa rel. lib. 1. c. 3.), and other authors, not being able to declare it by what it is, declare it by what it is not; some saying it is that which has no end; others, that which endures no change; others, that which holds no comparison; which is as much as to say, it is that which is unlimited, immutable, and not proportionable with any thing besides itself. It shall suffice, therefore, to declare, and, as it were, anatomize, these three conditions of eternity; if not to give a perfect knowledge of what it is, yet at least to beget a fear and reverence of that which most concerns us, and withal to create in us a contempt and scorn of all which is temporal, as being little, limited and mutable.

SECTION II.

For the first condition, which is to have no end; *Cæsarina* says (*Cæs. dialog. 3.*), that eternity is a day, which wants an evening, because it shall never see the sun of its brightness set; which is to be understood of the eternity of saints, that of sinners being a night which wants morning, upon whom the sun of glory shall never rise, wherein the damned shall remain in perpetual sadness and obscurity, eternally tormented both in soul and body. If he who is sick of a calenture, though laid upon a soft and downy bed, thinks each hour of night an age, and every minute expects and with impatience wishes for the day, how shall it fare with those who, because in this life they slept when they were to watch, shall in the next lie awake for an eternal night, in a bed of burning fire, without ever hoping for a morning? And certainly, if there were in hell no other pain, than to live in that eternal night and sadness, it were enough to astonish and confound all human understanding. This very condition of wanting an end, the ancients deciphered by the figure of a ring, which, being a circle, is endless. But, with great mystery, David calls it a *crown*, whose roundness also admits no end; thereby signifying, according to Dionysius Carthusianus, that an eternity without end is either to be the reward of our good works, or the punishment of our bad. We ought to tremble at the sound of this voice, *without end*, for those who do ill; and to rejoice at this, *without end*, for those who do well. It falls not under our capacity, what it is to be without end. We cannot amplify it or exaggerate it so much, but that, whatsoever we say, we still fall short. Wherefore St. Bonaventure (*Bonav. de infer. c. 49.*), pondering with himself, in his meditations upon hell, that if a damned person should every hundred years let fall but only one

small tear, and those all to be preserved until, after innumerable centuries of years, they came to equal the sea, would perhaps so many hundred millions of years be thought to finish eternity? No; it would but then begin. Let them turn again, and keep the same flow of tears of that unfortunate sinner, until they have filled another ocean; would eternity then end? No; but then begin, as fresh and new as at the first day. Let them repeat the same ten, twenty, a hundred times, until a hundred thousand seas shall fill and overflow; shall we then find the bottom of eternity? No; we have not passed the superficies of it, and it shall still remain as deep and unsoundable as at first. There are no numbers, no arithmetic, that can comprehend the years of eternity; for, if the whole heavens were parchment, and filled on both sides with numbers, they could not sum up the least part of that, which has no parts at all, but is in itself whole, entire and indivisible. No sea hath so many drops, no mountain so many grains of sand, as will serve to reckon up the years of eternity.

To declare this more amply, I shall relate what happened to Archimedes:—There were some philosophers of his time, who affirmed that the number of the sands of the sea were infinite; others, that, although they were in themselves finite, yet they could not be comprehended under any number. Archimedes, that he might confute both opinions, composed a most learned and ingenious book, which he dedicated to king Gelon; wherein he proved that, although the world were all filled with sand, and that it were bigger than what it is, yet, that the multitude of those grains of sand were limited, and might also be reduced under numbers; and he himself gave the account, to what number they would arise. Since this philosopher, father Clavius did the like, computing how many grains of sand would fill the whole space between the firmament of the fixed stars and the earth, making every grain of sand so little and indivisible, that he allows 10,000 of them to the bigness of a poppy, or mustard-seed, and, notwithstanding, sums up this vast number within the short space of one line, all not surpassing one unit, and 51 ciphers. If, then, so many millions of millions may be contained in the length of one line, what shall we say of the infinite years in eternity; since that not only one line, nor one book, nor all the paper in the world, nor all the world, from the firmament downwards, filled with the figures of arithmetic, were sufficient to contain one little particle of it, notwithstanding the multiplication which is made by the adding of every figure? Every cipher that is added, makes the number ten times more than it was; because a cipher put after one unit makes it ten, the second cipher makes it one hundred, the third one thousand, and in this manner the numbers go multiplying to an immense number in a few figures. Whereby one may conceive that, adding one hun-

dred ciphers, it makes the numbers rise to such a pitch, that it far exceeds the capacity of man's imagination to conceive it. What, then, would it be, adding so many ciphers as could be contained in a parchment as big as the whole heaven? Yet all this innumerable number does not equal the least particle of eternity; which, after so many numberless years past, that at length, after how long a time soever, must meet an end, would yet remain as if it did but then begin. Let us seriously think, how long were that life to be esteemed, which should contain a hundred thousand years; yet we have thought of nothing in respect of eternity. Let us think of ten times a hundred, a thousand times as much; still nothing to eternity; neither have we quitted the least part of it, which is but then beginning. Wherefore Lactantius says (Lib. 1. de falsa relig. cap. 12.); "With what years shall we satiate eternity, since it has no end?" It is still beginning, and nothing but a beginning, and, therefore, may not unsignificantly be thus defined: Eternity is a perpetual beginning, which still continues without end or diminution. Let us abstract from eternity as many years as there are drops in the sea, atoms in the air, leaves in the fields, grains of sand in the earth, or stars in the heavens, it will yet continue whole and entire; add as many years to it, it becomes no greater, nor is further distant from its end; since it admits none, but in each point and instant receives a beginning. Never, never shall it have an end; ever, ever in beginning. Let one imagine, that there were a mountain of sand, which should reach from the earth to heaven, and that an angel, after every thousand years, should take from it one single grain; how many thousands of thousands of years, and millions of millions would pass, before the mountain became so little, that it would no longer remain perceptible? Let the best arithmetician that is, cast up the account, how many years would pass, before that angel had taken away half of the aforesaid mountain. This seems a thing endless; but our understanding is beguiled; for it would have an end, and time would come when one half, and even the whole mountain would be taken away. Finally, there would be a time, when there would be one only little grain remaining; and this also would be removed; but never shall we come to the end of eternity; and after the consuming of that whole mountain of sand, nothing would be diminished from eternity: but the mountain of eternity would remain as entire, after millions of millions of ages were past, as in the beginning: after the consuming millions of such mountains, the torments of the damned will be as entire, flaming and vehement, as at the beginning. This seems to have been signified by that of Habacuc, when he said, "The mountains of ages are torn in pieces; and the hills of the world shall be humbled by the ways of eternity;" because one thousand hills and mountains, as big as the whole world, may be consumed a

thousand times over, whilst the eternity of the punishment of sinners pass over them; which eternity can never make an end of passing; so that those miserable souls, who suffer in that devouring fire, shall suffer a thousand and a thousand, and millions of millions of years, without coming nearer to the end, than they were the first day.

SECTION III.

What man would endure to lie upon one side before a scorching fire for the space of a whole year? But what speak I of lying burning? Who would endure to be laid in a soft bed upon one side, without being permitted to rise or turn to the other side, for the same space? This, indeed, was a rigorous penance performed by Ezechiel the prophet, at the command of God, who appointed him, that he should continue laid upon one side without rising, for the space of three hundred and ninety days. This was a most rigorous penance, but, by divine grace, accomplished by the holy prophet. If it be then so difficult to lie immovable upon one side for so short a time as the space of one year, what shall it be for a condemned sinner to lie stretched upon a bed of fire in that eternal night and sadness of hell, all sorts of evils raining down upon him for a time without end or limit? What Christian is there, who should consider and frame a lively conceit of this, but would become another man? Who could take delight in a momentary pleasure of this life, running the danger of those eternal pains in the next? Who would dare to sin at the hazard of so great a punishment? O how powerful a remedy it were against the disordered customs of sinners, if they would but settle themselves seriously to think that eternity has no end, that it is to last for ever! O that they would think of this one half hour in the day, or but so much in a week, how quickly would they amend their lives! But this is a thought not to be passed over in haste, but leisurely pondered with attention and profound consideration, meditating within ourselves what eternity is; that it is that which shall never have an end, never, never. For as that meat which is not chewed, nor concocted in the stomach, benefits nothing, so the thought of eternity, without being well ruminated and digested, will be of little advantage to us.

The force of this consideration appears by an accident related by Benedictus Renatus (Benedict. Renat. lib. 5.), of a certain man vain and vicious, named Fulk; who, as he was given to all sorts of pleasure and delicacy, would be sure not to want a soft bed and long repose. But one night, his sleep failing him, tossing and turning from side to side, desiring every moment that day would break, whilst he lay thus awake, this thought came into his consideration: "What wouldst thou take to lie in this manner for the space of two or three years in continual darkness, without

conversation, or friends, or entertainment of thy pleasures? Certainly, although thou shouldst lie at thy ease, and upon a soft bed, as thou now dost, yet the trouble would be intolerable. But know, that thou art not to depart so cheap out of this life; thou art not to escape hence at thy own choice: at the best that can happen, thou art to lie languishing in thy death-bed, where thou art to pass many evil and tedious nights, unless perchance thou die suddenly, which will be worse; and when thou leavest that bed and diest, dost thou know what bed shall then expect thee? what couch death hath provided for thee? Thy body certainly shall lie upon the hard and cold earth, and be devoured by worms; but concerning thy soul; what shall become of it? Knowest thou whither it shall go? Assuredly, according to thy present life, it shall go to hell, where a terrible bed of fire awaits thee, not for a year or two, but for a whole eternity. There thou art to continue in perpetual darkness and torments, where a thousand thousand millions of years are not sufficient to satisfy for one of thy unlawful pleasures. There shalt thou see no sun, nor heaven, nor God. Alas! if this poor want of sleep is so hard to be endured, how shall I suffer the eternal torments of hell?—That which now imports me, is to change my course of life; for in this way I now go, I am lost for ever.” These considerations made so deep an impression in his mind of eternity, that he could not quit the thought of it, until he had resolved to become a religious man; but would often say with himself, “What dost thou here, miserable man? Thou livest in the world, and the world affords thee no comfort; thou sufferest many things, which thou wouldst as willingly avoid, and wantest others, which thou wouldst as willingly enjoy. Thou molestest thyself with the cares of this life, and what reward attends thee for all thy trouble? Thou enjoyest no complete pleasures; and if thou didst, it would not last. Seest thou not daily those who die, and enter into eternity? O eternity, eternity, if thou beest not in heaven, wheresoever thou art, even in this soft bed, thou art grievous! I will, therefore, endeavor to ensure heaven, and for a little will not lose much; for what is temporal, the eternal:” and so, putting in execution what he had resolved upon, he entered a religious person into the order of the Cistercians.

SECTION IV.

All our actions are still to be accompanied with this thought, *For ever, For ever* shall be rewarded that which I do well; and that for ever punished, if I grievously offend. With this consideration shall a Christian not only animate himself to do good works, but to do them well. *Ælian* (Lib. 1. Var. Hist. cap. 21) writes of *Ismenias*, ambassador from the Thebans to the king of

Persia, that, being about to deliver his embassy, and advertised, that before he spoke a word, he was to adore the king; Ismenias, thinking this honor too much to be bestowed upon a barbarous prince, yet seeing no way to avoid it, fell upon this device. He took his ring, which anciently was of great esteem, as signifying the quality and authority of him that wore it, and pulling it from his finger, let it secretly fall at the king's feet, while he lay prostrate before him, saying within himself, "Not to thee, but to this ring." If we in like manner should, in all our actions, propose to ourselves eternity, and wholly respect it, we should find little difficulty in any good work we went about. Let us, therefore, fix our eyes and thoughts upon it, which is to be given us for that which may be done in a moment. Blessed be God, who bestows upon us a reward without end, for troubles so short, that they scarcely have a beginning. Euripides, a famous poet amongst the Greeks, complained upon a time, that in three whole days he had made but three verses, and those not without trouble. Alcestides, another poet present, answered, "For me one day is sufficient to make a hundred verses, and that with ease." Euripides then replied, "It is no marvel, since thy verses are but for three days, and mine for ever." In the same manner Zeuxis, a most excellent painter, but above all measure slow, being asked why he was so tedious in his work, answered, "I paint leisurely, because I paint for ever." But certainly he deceived himself; for at this day there is no picture of his to be seen: and for Euripides, many of his works are lost. But no good work of the just shall perish; neither have we need so much as of a day to gain eternity. For one act of contrition, which is made in a moment, does it, and in a moment we gain those joys, which shall endure without end. Yet ought we to make use of this consideration of Euripides and Zeuxis, and not only to do good works, but to do them seriously and perfectly well, since we work not for this life, but for eternity, which ought ever to be in our memory.

The benefit which David reaped from this consideration, was a firm resolution to mend his life, and change into a new man; animating himself to a greater observance, and more high perfection. And so, in that psalm, wherein he says, that he thought upon the days of old, and the years of eternity, he adds immediately the effect of his meditation, saying, that he was to begin anew; because the change which he found in his heart, he perceived, was from the most powerful hand of God. Wherefore, considering that eternity never ends, but still begins, and that it is wholly a beginning, he determined with such new fervor, to give a beginning to a more perfect life, that he would never flag, nor be dismayed in the prosecution of it; willing in this to imitate eternity, which, as it is ever beginning, so, he would ever

begin to deserve it. And what great matter is it, if that which we are to enjoy or suffer be ever in beginning, that we should likewise be ever beginning, either to deserve the one or fly the other? Our reward is not to fail us; and, therefore, there is no reason why we should fail, and grow weary in our service and endeavors. Our joy is ever to begin; why, then, should not our endeavors be ever beginning? The repose we hope for, shall never have an end; why, then, should our deservings ever cease? With this consideration St. Arsenius much profited himself, making account, that although he had served God many years in a most holy life, yet that he did but then begin; repeating often these words of David, "Now I begin, now I begin." We ought never to look back upon our labors past, but still to animate ourselves to labor anew for God and his service; as did the apostle St. Paul, who says of himself (Philip. 3. Vide Masuet. in vita S. Pauli), That he did forget what was past; that he did enlarge his heart and mind, extending it for that which was to come; which the apostle spoke at a time when he had suffered much, and done such services to God in the good of souls, as he had already labored more than all the apostles: after he had entered into the synagogues of Damascus, and publicly preached Jesus Christ with so imminent danger of his life, that if he had not escaped over the walls of the city, he had been cut in a thousand pieces; after that, in Arabia, he had converted many people, many in Tarsus, and in Antioch; after he had been wrapped up into the third heaven; after he had been elected by the Holy Ghost to be an apostle, and wrought great and prodigious miracles; after he had passed over Asia Minor, all Greece, and the better part of Europe, converting innumerable souls; after he had distributed great alms, gathering them with much labor, made long journeys, and brought them to the poor in Jerusalem; after the suffering of innumerable persecutions; after having been thrice stoned, and once left for dead; after having been often whipped, and often apprehended; after infinite services performed for the church;—after all these, it seemed to him that he had suffered nothing, done nothing for Christ, and he forgot it all, as if it had been the first day of his conversion, determining still to do more, to suffer more, to labor more, to begin anew, esteeming himself, after so many labors and services, to be a useless and an unprofitable servant, following the counsel of our Saviour, when he says (Luke xvii.), "After you have done all what I have commanded you to do, say, ye are unprofitable servants, and that ye have done what ye ought to have done." Let a man compare his labors, his zeal, his preaching, his charity, with that of the apostle, and he will find he has not yet begun. If, then, the apostle, who at that time exceeded the merits of divers saints, who have died in great holiness, and yet

forgot all, judging he had done nothing, but turned to begin afresh, we, who have not yet begun, wherefore shall we be weary before we begin? Let us ever begin anew, since eternity, which we hope for, is ever to be new, and ever to begin. "Let us not glory (says Dionysius Carthusianus) in the merits of our life past, neither let us esteem ourselves for any thing we have already done, but let us bestir ourselves as freshly, and with as much fervor, as if we did but that day begin, and were that day also to die."

CHAPTER IX.

How Eternity is without Change.

THE second condition of eternity is to be immutable, and to persevere without change; which the ancients gave us to understand by many most mysterious symbols. Some figured it by painting a chair; conformable to which the prophet Isaiah says (Isaiah vi.), that he saw the Lord sitting on high upon a throne, setting forth, in this settled posture, the immutability and greatness of his eternity. And St. John, in his Apocalypse, often celebrates the seat of God, as representing his eternal duration. More clearly the prophet Daniel (Dan. xvii.), to whom God vouchsafed to appear as he was eternal; whereupon he calls him the ancient of days, and says he beheld him with his hair all white, and seated upon a throne. From the same consideration, the Nasamones, a certain people of Africa, when any amongst them was about to die, caused them to sit, and in that posture to expire, signifying thereby the state wherein his soul was presently to enter. And for the same cause they interred their dead sitting; giving us thereby to understand, that rest and repose were not to be sought for until death, when we were to enter the gates of eternity. This life is no place to sit in; we are not here to stay; the misery which we find in it sufficiently declares, that God made it not for that purpose. This life is but lent us; we are not to abide in it, but to walk apace to the mountain of eternity. It is so miserable, that even itself informs us of another life, wherein we shall find rest, since here we cannot meet it. In heaven, all our unhappiness, all our miseries are to cease; there the tears of this valley are to be wiped from our eyes; there our troubles are to find ease; there the unquietness of our hearts is to have repose. In this world, no manner of life, no sort of state, no condition of man, no greatness of dignity, no abundance of riches, no felicity of fortune, can ever give rest to the possessor. For this reason the Romans, in the statues which they erected to their deceased emperors, made them still sitting; whereby they

would signify, that all the felicity of this world could not bestow true rest, and even upon him who was the master of it, until the end of life. Man is born, as Job says, to labor. Until death, there is no rest; let us not then seek it here, but let us place the chair of our joys where it may be firm and stable, and not in the unquietness and turmoils of things temporal, where death at least will certainly overthrow it.

Others painted eternity in the form of a snake, to note the condition of a perpetual continuance, not subject to change, but remaining still in the same state and vigor. For as this serpent wants wings, feet and hands, which are the extremities of other creatures; so eternity wants an end, which is the extremity of things temporal. Moreover, as serpents, although without feet, wings, or any extrinsical organ of motion, yet, by their great liveliness of spirit, move more swiftly than those creatures which have them; so eternity, without days or nights, or changes, which are the feet and wings of time, outstrips and over-goes all things that are temporal. Besides, serpents enjoy such a vivacity and length of time, that Philo Biblius says (*Apud Euseb. l. 1. de præpar. Evang. c. 7.*) they die not, unless they be killed, and that they hardly know a natural death, being not subject to those changes of other creatures, from youth to age, and from health to sickness, but preserve themselves still fresh and young by the often renewing and casting of their old skins; neither have they, like other creatures, any determinate size of their greatness, but so long as they live increase in bigness, after the manner of eternity, which has no limit, change or declination; a condition of all others most to be feared by the wicked, who are for ever to continue in those eternal torments without the least refreshment, and without so much as the comfort of changing one torment for another. St. Paulinus said of St. Martin, that his rest was to change his labors; and certainly, to change one pain for another, although not in itself much less, is yet some ease. But even this shall be wanting to the damned, who shall never be permitted so much change, as to turn from one side to another. A fearful thing, that being now five thousand years past, since the first damned soul was plunged into hell, that, during all this time, no change should afford him the least ease. How many alterations have since happened in this world, yet none in his most bitter torments! The world has once been destroyed by a universal deluge, eight only persons remaining alive; after which, all men enjoying an equal liberty, the Assyrians became tyrants over the rest, and raised the first monarchy, which endured twelve hundred and forty years, and then, not without the general uproar and turmoil of all Asia, passed to the Medes, with whom it continued three hundred years; which ended, it came to the Persians; and from them to the Grecians, from whom, not without

greater alteration than any of the former, it passed to the Romans; under whom also it has since failed. Amongst all which changes and revolutions of the world, none has yet passed over that miserable and unfortunate creature. Besides these alterations in governments, what alterations has nature itself suffered? what islands has the sea swallowed up? one of which, as Plato reports, was bigger than all Europe and Africa; and what others has it cast up anew? What buildings, or, to say better, what mountains, have the earthquakes left secure? many hills have been overwhelmed, or turned topsy-turvy; others have appeared and sprung up never known before. What cities have been sunk? what rivers dried up, and others burst forth through new channels? what towers have not fallen? what walls not been ruined? what monuments not defaced? how often has the face of things changed? how many revolutions have the greatest kingdoms suffered? and this miserable sinner has in all this time not given one turn. How many times has the year renewed itself? how many springs, how many autumns past? how many days, how many nights? and yet he remains in that obscure night, as in his first entrance into that place of torments. The sun has compassed this elementary world a million and seven hundred thousand times; and yet this wretched soul could never once change his posture, or remove one pace since his first falling into hell. Besides this, what troubles, what labors have been passed by those innumerable people, who have lived from the beginning of the world until the present, and are now all vanished? what sicknesses have been suffered? what torments, what griefs endured, and are now forgotten? but no grief nor torment of that unfortunate sinner has, in these five thousand years, passed away, nor shall ever become less. Ptolemy roared out with the pain of his gout; Aristarchus was grieved with his dropsy; Cambyzes was afflicted with his falling sickness; Theopompus afflicted with his phthisic, Tobias with his blindness, and holy Job with his leprosy; yet those griefs had their end. But all those evils, which jointly possess this miserable creature, have not, nor ever shall have change or period. They of Rabatha were sawed in the middle; others thrashed to death with flails; others burned alive in furnaces; others torn in pieces by wild beasts. Anaxarchus was pounded in a mortar; Perillus burned in a brazen bull; but all those pains passed away, and are now no more; but that damned person has not yet made an end; or, to say better, has not yet begun to pass any one of his torments, which a hundred thousand years hence shall be as new and sensible to him as they were in the beginning. What desperation must then seize upon him, when he sees a change in all things, and in his pains and torments none! for if even the pleasures of this life, if continued the same, are converted into griefs, how shall those pains, which never change,

be suffered? what spite and madness shall possess him, when he shall behold the flames of St. Lawrence, the stripes of St. Clement of Ancira, the cross of St. Andrew, the fasts of St. Hilarion, the hair-cloth of Simeon Stylites, the disciplines of St. Dominic, all the torments of martyrs and penances of confessors now passed, and turned into eternal joys; but his own pains neither to pass nor change, nor any hopes left either of ending his torments or himself! These are evils to be feared, and not those transitory ones of the world, which either change, grow less or end, or at least make an end of him who suffers them. Let not, therefore, the sick person be grieved and vexed with his infirmities, nor the poor man with his wants, nor the afflicted with his crosses, since the evils of this life are either changed with time, eased by counsel and consolations, or at least ended by death. But this miserable wretch in hell cannot so much as comfort himself with the hope of dying, because in that multitude of torments, if there were the least hope of end, it would be some ease, some refreshment, which must not there happen, the gates on all sides being shut against comfort. Hope beguiles us in our evils, and, in some sort, frees us from the sense of suffering. There is no labor or toil so great, which hope makes not tolerable. The most afflicted and wretched persons live and subsist with expectation, that one day their miseries will change or end: but that ease and comfort is denied the damned, whose unhappiness is never to have an end, nor their torments alteration. They would esteem it for a comfort, if, a thousand years hence, they might be sure of that little drop of water begged by the rich glutton: but what speak I of a thousand years? if after a hundred thousand, after a thousand times so many, so that some certain time were prefixed, and the door but of some small hope set open to them. If all the space which is taken up by the earth, covered by the water, filled with the air, and encompassed by the heavens, were full of grains of wheat; and a damned soul were told, that after all that wheat were eaten by some small bird, which, after every hundred thousand years should come to take one grain, and when it should have taken away the last, they would give it that drop of water, which was demanded by the assistance of Lazarus, it would be comforted to see this only change, and so small an ease in the midst of its pains. Yet it shall not have this; and after so many millions of millions of years, the miserable wretch shall be in the same torments, raging in the same manner, and as much void of all comfort as ever. This is what shall burst the hearts of the damned, when they shall perceive all remedies to be then impossible, which in this life were so easily to be obtained. With the crumbs of bread which fell from his table, the rich glutton might have purchased eternal happiness; and now the refreshment of one drop of water is denied him. What rancor

shall they have against themselves; when they shall remember, that by the forbearance of one momentary pleasure they might have escaped eternal torments. How raging will their very entreaties be to consider, that that is now past help, which was heretofore so easily to be avoided.

Let, therefore, a Christian open his eyes, whilst he may remedy that, which hereafter, when he would, will be impossible. Now is the time acceptable, now is the time of salvation, now is the time of pardon and indulgence; now that may be gained in a moment, which all eternity cannot hereafter redeem. What other thing was signified to us by the flames of the Babylonian furnace (Dan. iii.), which, as the Scripture says, mounted to the height of forty-nine cubits? It does not say fifty, as is usual in other places to give the complete number, although some be wanting. And who, I pray you, approached so near to that flame which flew and moved up and down in the air, that could so punctually measure the height of it to arise just to forty-nine cubits, and not to reach fifty? But herein was the mystery we are about to speak of. The number of fifty was the number of the jubilee, and signified indulgence and pardon, and by the flames of that furnace were figured the flames of hell; which, how far soever they shall exceed the torments of this life, yet shall never attain to a jubilee, and remission of their pains. Now, it is true, they may; now, every year, every month, every day, every hour and every moment, is a time of pardon and jubilee. What would a damned soul give for one quarter of an hour of those whole days and weeks, which men misspend in this life, to be able to do penance in? Let us, therefore, not be prodigal of a thing so precious; let us not lose time, and with it eternal glory. The time of this life is so precious, that St. Bernardin dares give it this exaggeration, saying, that "time is worth as much as God;" because by it God is gained. Let us not, therefore, fling away a thing of that value, but let us make use of this cheap bargain; purchasing with time, eternity, and God himself, the Lord of eternity; fulfilling that which was said by Ecclesiasticus (Eccl. xx.): "Is there any who for a small price will redeem many things?" Upon which words Galfridus says (Galfrid. in Cant.), "If there be due to thee eternal bitterness, and thou mayest escape it by suffering what is temporal, certainly thou hast redeemed great matters for a small price." In blessings eternal, it is likewise a great comfort to have them free from change, so as they can neither end nor diminish; and that temporal goods changing and consuming themselves, they remain in the same firm and stable condition for all eternity. Let a Christian compare the brevity and inconstancy of the things of this life, with the immutability and eternal duration of those of the other: let him seriously observe the difference between these two words, *now* and *ever*. The fools of this world say, Let us

now rejoice: the wise and virtuous say, It is better that we forbear our pleasures now, that we may hereafter enjoy eternal happiness. The worldlings say, Let us now live daintily and fare deliciously: the servants of Christ say, Let us now die in the flesh, that we may live for ever without change. The sinners say, Let us now enjoy the world: they who fear God say, Let us fly from this culpable world, that we may for ever enjoy the celestial. Compare these two, and judge who are the wiser; those who aim only at that which endures but this momentary instant *now*, or those who look after eternity, which lasts for *ever*; those who should suffer eternally without any profit at all, or those who are content to suffer a little in this world, for so great a gain as is the kingdom of heaven. O most miserable and disconsolate life of the damned! who are neither to have end in their torments, change in their griefs, nor to reap profit by the pains which they suffer. Three things only afford us comfort in the troubles of this life; that either they may end, or become more supportable by change, or at least that we shall be recompensed by some benefit for our sufferance; all which will fail in eternal pains, in which there is no hope either of end, change or profit. A fearful mistake! to suffer for a whole eternity, without benefit hereafter, for not suffering a moment now, with so great a reward as in the eternal glory of God, and the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER X.

How Eternity is without Comparison.

FROM what is already spoken, may be collected the third quality of eternity, which is; to be without comparison. For, as there is no comparison between what is infinite, and what is finite, so there can be none between what is eternal, and what is temporal. And as the mountain Olympus (or any greater in the world) is as far distant from the immensity of God, as the smallest grain of sand; so a thousand years are as far short of eternity as the twinkling of an eye. Wherefore Boetius says, that there is more similitude between a moment of time and ten thousand years, than between ten thousand years and eternity. There is no expression which can sufficiently set forth the greatness of what is eternal, nor which can explicate the brevity of time, and littleness of what is temporal. Wherefore David (Ps. lxxvi.), when he considered what had passed, since God created the world, until his time, calls all those ages, which were already past, by the name of days, saying, "I thought upon the days of old." And it is not much that he should call ages days, when in another

place he says, "A thousand years, in the presence of God, are but as yesterday, which has passed." And St. John (1 John ii.) expresses it yet more fully, when he calls all those years which were to pass between his time and the end of the world, whereof one thousand are already run, but an hour. But David, when he set himself seriously to think upon eternity, which in itself is but one, and, as the saints speak, one day, he calls it eternal years, augmenting as much as he could the conception of eternity, and diminishing that of time. For the same reason, the prophet Daniel, setting forth the glory of apostolical persons, speaks in the plural number, that "they shall shine like stars for perpetual eternities;" it seeming to him, that the ordinary number did not suffice to declare what eternity was; and therefore explains it by the number of many eternities, adding for more amplification, the epithet of *perpetual*; Dan. xii. But endeavor we never so much, we declare nothing of it. Let the prophets turn themselves wholly into tongues; let them call it perpetual eternities; let them call it eternity of eternities; let them call it many days; let them call it ages of ages; all falls short to explain the infinite duration which it has. Wherefore Eliu, speaking of God (Job xxxvi.), says his years were inestimable, because no years imaginable could compare with his eternity. Between a minute and one hundred thousand years, there is proportion; but between a hundred thousand years and eternity, none at all. Well may a quarter of an hour be compared to a million of years; but a million of years with eternity holds no comparison; in respect of which, all time vanishes and disappears; neither is a million of years more than a moment, since neither have proportion with eternity, but in respect of it are both equal, or (to say better) are both nothing. Wherefore the wise man said (Eccl. xi.), "That if a man had lived many years, and those all in pleasure, yet ought he to remember the time of darkness, and the many days (for so he calls eternity), which, when they shall come, all that is past will be found to be vanity." If Cain had lived and enjoyed all the felicity of the earth, even until this day, and at the instant he died, what should he now possess of all his delights? what should remain to him of all his days past? Certainly no more than remained to his brother Abel, whom he murdered more than five thousand five hundred years ago: equally had both their days disappeared, and Cain had no more left of his sports and pleasures, so fully and for so long a time enjoyed, than Abel of his short life; but more to suffer in that time of darkness, and the many days of eternity. For if, as Ecclesiasticus says (Eccl. xi.), "The evils of one hour make many pleasures to be forgotten," and the moment wherein a man dies bereaves him of all he did in life, either for delight or appetite; why shall not, then, the torments of hell make him forget all the pleasures of the earth, and the eternity of evils strip him of

a few and momentary pastimes? If, with the grief of one hour, the pleasures of many years are forgotten, why shall not the pleasure of one moment, for which thou fallest into hell, be forgotten with the malice of many years? And if the instant of thy bodily death deprive thee of all thy vain contents, and entertainments past, what shall be done by the eternal death of thy soul? In that instant, wherein Heliogabalus died, what continued with him of all his sports and delights? Nothing. At this present, after so many years measured in the eternity of hell, what now remains with him but torments upon torments, griefs upon griefs, pains upon pains, evils upon evils, and a perpetual lamentation, which shall last as long as God is God? The moment wherein we die (as to the things of this life) makes all men equal. He who lived long, and he who died shortly; he who enjoyed much, and he who had but little; he who was glutted with all sorts of delights, and he who was fed with the bread of sorrow, and vexed with all sorts of griefs and misfortunes; all are now the same, all are ended in death; the one is not sensible of his pleasure, nor the other grieved with his labors. After the expiration of a hundred years in a most rigid life, what felt St. Romualdus of all his austerities? What the most penitent Simeon Stylites, after fourscore years of a prodigious penance, wherein he quitted not his hair-shirt by day or night? What felt he at his death of his continual fasts and long prayers? Certainly, of pain no more, than if he had spent all that long time in the wanton pleasures of Sardanapalus. Of grief he found nothing, but of joy and glory he now does, and ever shall, in abundance. What felt St. Clement of Ancira of his twenty-eight years' torments, suffered from the furious rage and madness of tyrants? Certainly, of pain no more, than if during that time he had enjoyed all the delights of the world; but of glory and eternity. For, if the malice of one hour make the contents of a hundred years to be forgotten, much more will the happiness of an eternity blot out the remembrance of twenty-eight years' suffering! O wonderful moment of death! which gives an end to all that is temporal, and a beginning to all that is eternal; which transmits and changes all things; which concludes the gusts and pleasures of sinners, and begins their torments; which ends the labors and austerities of saints, and begins their glory and joys eternal.

Let, therefore, a Christian seriously consider, that the pleasures by which he sins, and the mortifications by which he satisfies, are equally to have an end; and that the torments which he deserves by the one, and the joys which he merits by the other, are equally never to have an end; and let him then make election of that which shall be best for him. Let him see if it be not better for him to work for himself an eternal crown of glory out of the slight and momentary sufferings of this life: and let not

the length of life affright him ; for there is nothing long in respect of eternity. It was, therefore, well said by St. Augustine (In Ps. **102**) "that all which has an end is short." A hundred years of **life** have an end, and are therefore short ; a thousand years, a hundred thousand millions have their end, and are therefore in the appearance of what is immense but little, and in respect of eternity no more than an instant. In the same manner, we are to look upon a thousand years as upon an hour ; and for itself, a long life is no more to be desired than a short, since both, in respect of eternity, bear the same bulk. And as, in respect of a solid body, a thousand superficies bear no more proportion than one, all of them together being as incapable of making up the least particle of solidity, as one only ; so, in respect of eternity, one year is not less than a thousand, nor a thousand more than one. And upon all time, although it were a million of ages, we are to look as upon an instant, and upon all that is temporal, as upon a superficies, which has only an appearance, but nothing of substance ; neither can all time, nor all temporal goods together, make up one only good of eternity. If the whole earth be but a point in respect of the heavens, which are, notwithstanding, of a finite and limited greatness, what greater matter is it, if all time be but as an instant in respect of eternity, which is infinite and without limit ? Between the earth, nay, between the least grain of sand, and the highest heaven, there is a proportion ; both have quantity ; but between a thousand years and eternity, none at all, and are, therefore, less than a point. O blindness of men ! who are so besotted with time, that in life they desire pleasure, and in death a memorial, and both in death and life, a fame and renown ; for what ? even for a moment, for an instant. Wherefore desirest thou pleasure in life, which to-morrow is to end ? Wherefore desirest thou a vain memory after death, which can endure no longer than the world, whose end will not be long deferred ? And although it should last for a million of ages, it were but short ; since those also must conclude, and all were but as a moment in respect of eternity. As the immensity of God is in respect of place, so is eternity in respect of time ; and as, in respect of the immensity of God, the whole sea is no greater than a drop of water, nor an atom in the air less than the whole world ; so, in respect of eternity, one hundred thousand years and half a quarter of an hour are the same. If God then should bestow upon thee this life only for a quarter of an hour, and that thou knewest likewise, that the world, within an hour after thy death, were to end also, wouldst thou spend that short time in ostentation, and setting forth thyself, whereby to raise a fame, that might endure that short time after thy life ? No, certainly ; thou wouldst busy thyself with other thoughts, thou wouldst think of providing to die well, and not trouble thyself in leaving a vain fame and memory, which

were so small a time to serve thee. Know, then, that thou oughtest to do the same, although thou were certain to live a hundred years, and the world to endure a hundred thousand after thee. For all that has an end is short, and all time, in respect of eternity, is but a day, an hour, a moment. Remember, therefore, the saying of St. John, who said his time was in the last hour of the world, although there then wanted many years ; all which, in respect of eternity, were but as one hour. So, then, if thou wouldst not be solicitous of leaving a name behind thee, if the world were to continue but an hour, no more oughtest thou to be now, although it were to endure for many ages.

If thou knewest for certain that thou hadst to live a hundred years, and that, during that time, thou shouldst have nothing to eat, or sustain thyself, but what thou drewest from the store and treasure of some great king, and that too in the small space of an hour, wouldst thou spend that hour in walking abroad, in vain conversation and entertainments ? Certainly not. Thou wouldst not cease from laboring and making haste to load thyself with those treasures. How art thou then so careless, knowing that thy soul is to live for an eternity, and that thou hast nothing to sustain it with hereafter, but what thou gainest by thy merits within the space of this short life ? Look how short a time is allowed thee to provide for eternity : how art thou then so negligent as to pass it in vain pleasures ? how comest thou then to laugh, and not to weep rather, and tear thy flesh with rigid penance and mortifications ? More is an hour in respect of a hundred years, than a hundred thousand are in respect of eternity : and, therefore, if in that hour, because the time appeared but short, thou wouldst not be slothful in furnishing thyself for a hundred years, much less oughtest thou to be slow in those hundred years of life, to provide for eternity. Consider also what a hundred years are in respect of a million, and a million of years in respect of eternity. If for a hundred years spent in torments, thou wert to enjoy a million in pleasure and content, certainly thou hadst a most advantageous bargain, since thou receivedst ten thousand times more than thou gavest. What a purchase hast thou then, if not for a hundred years of pain, but for a short hour spent in the mortification of some one vain pleasure, thou receivest an eternity of glory, in respect of which, a million of years are but as an instant ! See then how short is the space of this life to gain the eternal ; see how short is all time to merit eternity. Well did St. Augustine (in Ps. xxxix.) say, "For an eternal rest, thou wert in reason to undergo an eternal labor, and for an eternal felicity, to endure eternal pains." How then can the short labors of this life seem tedious to thee ? Questionless there is no just soul in heaven, nor damned in hell, that, so often as he casts his eyes upon eternity, is not astonished that so short a thing as this life should be the

key of so long a happiness in the one, or misery in the other. See then how cheap thou hast an eternity of glory, which is an infinite for a finite. Weigh a thousand years, weigh a thousand millions in counterpoise with eternity, they weigh nothing; all is but smoke and straw; there is no comparison between infinite and finite; between what is real and what is painted. Well did Plotinus say, that "time was the image of eternity;" conformable to which David said, that man passes away in an image; as if he should have said, he passes away in time. The same which is said of time may be said of goods and evils temporal, which pass along in time, which are all but counterfeited and painted stuff, in respect of those which are eternal. See then how cheap thou hast a glory without end, even for a short and transitory toil; a true and real happiness, for a painted labor. Certainly thou oughtest not only to fly the pleasures of this life, but even to abhor them, and to seek eternity through troubles, fire and sword. For as eternity holds no comparison with time, so it ought during time to be sought with fervor, diligence and incomparable solicitude. Solomon said of wisdom (Prov. iii.), that in her right hand she held eternity, or length of days, and in her left riches and glory; to signify with what earnestness we ought to seek the eternal, and to prefer virtue before wealth and honors. For as the right hand is possessed of more force and vigor than the left, so we ought to hold fast and preserve the eternal with all our strength, but not the temporal; which, how glorious soever they appear, we are but slightly to lay hold on, since they profit nothing. Things which have an end, sink as it were into the abyss of nothing, and are as if they had not been at all. Neither speak I only of the pleasures of life, but even of life itself, which is nothing but a shadow of a being in the midst of an eternity. Consider that thy pleasures, before thou hadst them, had for an eternity no being, and once past, shall for another eternity never be again. What are they then more, than if they had not been at all? All of them begin and end in the midst of eternity, which neither has beginning nor ending; and are now sunk and drunk up in that vast abyss, as if they had never been. And, therefore, what is temporal, and passes away, shall profit thee little, unless thou draw from it some fruit that is permanent and eternal.

CHAPTER XI.

What is Time, according to Aristotle, and other Philosophers ; and of the little Consistence of Life.

ALTHOUGH it may be collected out of that which is spoken, what time is, and what temporal life, and those things which pass along in time are ; let us, notwithstanding, having already treated of eternity, consider it now more particularly, that we may from thence frame a more lively conception of the baseness of things temporal, and greatness of eternal. Aristotle defines time to be the *measure of motion* ; because, where there is no change or succession, there is no time. This Speusippus declares more fully, saying, " Time is the measure of the swift and speedy course of the sun ;" and Proclus will have it to be, " the number of the courses and revolutions of the celestial bodies ;" the Pythagoreans, " of the motion of the highest sphere, which turns the rest of the inferior orbs." Conformable to which, Albertus Magnus (Albert. Mag. in 3. Phys. tract. 2. c. 3.) said it was " the measure of the motion of the Primum Mobile ;" insomuch, as all agree in this, that time is but an accident of a thing so inconstant, as is motion. Wherefore Avicenna (Avicen. suffi. lib. 2. c. 13.), not without reason, affirmed, that time was more invalid, vain and inconsiderable than motion. See then what it is to trust to human life ; since it is a member of that which is so inconstant and rapid as time, which runs and passes away according to the course of the sun, and revolutions of stars in the firmament, whose swiftness not only exceeds the flight of birds, but even surpasses the wind itself. Know, then, that death follows thee not with leaden feet ; it has wings, and comes flying in pursuit of thee with such swiftness, as greater cannot be imagined : it exceeds not only the birds of the air, but a discharged cannon moves not with that fury, as it runs after thee, and will at last not fail to overtake thee. Call to remembrance the swiftest things within thy apprehension, and they all move but the pace of a tortoise, in comparison of death. A falcon moves with great swiftness after a heron ; but all her speed is dull in respect of that of time, and death, which runs like an armed horseman to lay hold on thee. More swift than the motion of the bird is that of the fowler's arrow, since it hits and kills it flying ; but dull and slow is the swiftest arrow, in respect of that with which death aims at thee, even from the first moment of thy birth. What can be imagined more swift than a flash of lightning ? yet that moves leisurely in respect of death, which runs after thee with a motion equal to that of the stars in the firmament, whose swiftness is so prodigious, that,

ing to the more modern account of Clavius, they run in day more than a thousand seventeen millions and a half of leagues, and in one hour more than forty-two millions. At this rate does death pursue thee. How is it, that thou tremblest not? how comes it thou fearest it not? Now is the bow drawn, now the arrow let loose, and already in the way to hit thee. Why dost thou strive to shun it, and dost not rather humble and prepare thyself to receive it? If one should tell thee, that a whole tier of artillery were immediately to be discharged against thee, and no way left to avoid the stroke, how wouldst thou be amazed! but if thou perceivedst, that fire was already given, the very noise perhaps would kill thee. Know, then, that the artillery of death, with much more fury, is already shot, and there is no quarter of an hour wherein it flies not more than ten thousand leagues to overtake thee; and yet from whence it parted, and where it now is, thou knowest not. Wert thou certain it were far hence, yet it runs with so precipitate a course, that it will not fail in a short time to reach thee; and, therefore, thou being ignorant of what distance it is, thou oughtest every moment to expect it, since every moment it may be with thee.

Besides this of swiftness, we are to consider that other condition of time, noted by Aristotle, that it is "the measure of motion according to the precedent and subsequent;" which is the same, as if he should have said, time is the measure of motion, inasmuch as it contains parts after parts in a continual succession; which, as Averroes notes, is essentially included in the definition of time, as not having capacity to present things at once and together, but successively, and by parts; some ceasing to be, that others may succeed; the first parts every moment dying, that the second may possess their places. Those goods of life, which accompany our infancy, leave us in our youth; and those of our youth, when we become old. The candor, sincerity and innocence of children are lost, when they leave their frocks; and the strength and vigor of youth consist not with the wisdom and judgment of age. It is not in the power of time to give us all together; but the goods of life being limited, it bestows them with a limited and restrained hand: even life itself it gives us but by pieces, and mingles as many parts of death as it gives of life. The age of infancy dies, when we enter into that of childhood; that of childhood, when we become youths; that of youth, when we come to the age of manhood; that, when we are old, and even old age itself expires when we become decrepit; so that during the same life we find many deaths, and yet can hardly persuade ourselves that we shall die once. Let us cast our eyes upon our life past; let us consider what is become of our infancy, childhood and youth; they are now dead in us. In the same manner shall those ages of our life, which are to come, die also. Neither do we only die in the prin-

cipal times of life, but every hour, every moment includes a kind of death in the succession and change of things. What content is there in life, which quickly dies not by some succeeding sorrow? what affliction of pain, which is not followed by some equal or greater grief than itself? why are we grieved for what is absent, since it offends us when present? What we desire with impatience, being possessed, brings care and solicitude, loss, grief and affliction. The short time which any pleasure stays with us, it is not to be enjoyed wholly, and all at once, but tasted by parts; so as when the second part comes, we feel not the pleasure of the first, lessening itself every moment, and we ourselves still dying with it; there being no instant of life, wherein death gains not ground on us. The motion of the heavens is but the swift turn of the spindle, which rolls up the thread of our lives; and a most fleet horse, upon which death runs post after us. There is no moment of life wherein death has not equal jurisdiction; and, as a philosopher says, there is no point of life which we divide not with death: so as, if well considered, we live but only one point, and have not life, but for this present instant. Our years past are now vanished, and we enjoy no more of them, than if we were already dead; the years to come we yet live not, and possess no more of them, than if we were not yet born. Yesterday is gone, to-morrow we know not what shall be; of to-day many hours are past, and we live them not; others are to come, and whether we shall live them or not is uncertain: so that, all counts casts up, we live but this present moment, and in this also we are dying; so that we cannot say, that life is any thing, but the half of an instant, and an indivisible point divided between it and death. With reason, as Zacharias said, may this temporal life be called "the shadow of death," since, under the shadow of life, death steals upon us: and as, at every step the body takes, the shadow takes another; so at every pace our life moves forward; death equally advances with it. And as eternity has this proportion, that it is ever in beginning, and is, therefore, a perpetual beginning; so life is ever ending and concluding, and may, therefore, be called a perpetual end, and a continual death. There is no pleasure in life, which, although it should last twenty continued years, can be present with us longer than an instant, and that with such a counterpoise, that in it death no less approaches, than life is enjoyed. Time is of so small a being and substance, and consequently our life, that, as Albertus Magnus says (*Phys.* 4. tract. 7. c. 4.), it has no essence permanent and stable, but only violent and successive, with which (not being able to detain itself in its career) it precipitates into eternity, and, like an ill-mouthed horse, runs headlong on, and tumbles under-foot all it meets with, and without stopping, runs past it finds before it. And as we cannot perfectly enjoy the sight of some gallant cavalier, decked with jewels and

adorned with glittering apparel, who, with bridle on the neck, passed in full career before us ; so are we not able perfectly to enjoy the things of this life, which are still in motion, and never rest one moment, but run headlong on, until they dash themselves in pieces upon the rock of death, and perish in the end. The name which the emperor Marcus Aurelius (Mar. Aurel. Anton. lib. 4.) gave to time, when he said it was "a furious and a raging wave," did not a little express this condition of it ; for, as such a wave sinks and overwhelms the vessel, not permitting the merchant to enjoy the treasures with which she was laden ; so time, with his violence and fury, ruins and drowns all that runs along in it. This philosopher, considering the brevity and fleetness of time, judged a long and short life to be the same ; whose opinion, for our further understanding, I shall here relate. "If some of the gods (says he) should tell thee, that thou wert to die to-morrow, or the day after, thou wouldst not (except thou wert of a base and abject spirit) make any account which, since the difference and distance between the two days were so small. In the same manner thou art to judge of the difference of dying to-morrow, and a thousand years hence. Consider seriously how many physicians, who, with knit brows, have felt the pulse of their sick patients, are now themselves dead ; how many mathematicians, who gloried in foretelling the death of others ; how many philosophers, who have disputed subtilly of death and mortality ; how many famous captains, who have killed and destroyed a multitude of people ; how many kings and tyrants, who with insolency have used their power over their oppressed vassals ; how many cities (if I may so say) have died, as Helice, Pompeii, Herculaneum, and innumerable others. Add to these, how many thou thyself hast known to die, and assisted at their exequies, and that which yesterday was flesh, and fresh, is to-day laid in pickle, or dust. Momentary then is all time." All this from this most wise prince.

CHAPTER XII.

How short Life is, for which Consideration all Things temporal are to be despised.

BEHOLD then what is time, and what thy life, and see if there can be any thing imagined more swift and more inconstant than it. Compare eternity, which continues ever in the same state, with time, which runs violently on and is ever changing ; and consider, that as eternity gives a value and estimation to those things which it preserves, so time disparages and takes away the value

of those that end in it. The least joy of heaven is to be esteemed as infinite, because it is infinite in duration; and the greatest content of the earth is to be valued as nothing, because it ends and concludes in nothing. The least torment in hell ought to cause an immense fear, because it is to last without end; and the greatest pains of this world are not to affright us, since they are to cease and determine. By how much eternity ennobles and adds to the greatness of those things which are eternal, by so much does time vilify and debase those things which are temporal; and, therefore, as all that is eternal, although it were little in itself, ought to be esteemed as infinite, so all which is temporal, although it were infinite, yet is to be esteemed as nothing, because it is to end in nothing. If a man were lord of infinite worlds, and possessed infinite riches, if they were at last to end, and he to leave them, they were to be valued as nothing; and if all things temporal have this evil property to fail and perish, they ought to have no more esteem, than if they were not. With good reason, then, is life itself to be valued as nothing, since nothing is more frail, nothing more perishing, and in conclusion is little more than if it had no being at all. Possessions, inheritances, riches, titles, and other goods of fortune, remain when man is gone, but not his life. A little excess of cold or heat makes an end of that; a sharp wind, the infectious breath of a sick person, a drop of poison makes it vanish; insomuch as no glass is so frail as it. Glass without violence may last long, but the life of man ends of itself; glass may with care be preserved for many ages, but nothing can preserve the life of man; it consumes itself.

All this was well understood by king David, who was the most powerful and happy prince the Hebrews ever had, as ruling over both the kingdoms of Judea and Israel, with all that was promised by God to the Israelites, but not until his time possessed; his dominions, besides, extending over many other provinces,* so as gold rolled up and down his house and court, and he left at his death vast treasures to his son Solomon. Yet this so fortunate a prince, considering that his greatness was to have an end, valued it as nothing, and not only esteemed his kingdoms and treasures as a vanity, but even his life itself; wherefore he says, "Thou hast put, O Lord, a measure unto my days, and my substance is as nothing;" all my rents, all my kingdoms, all my trophies, all my treasures, all that I possess, although so powerful a king, all is nothing; and presently adds, doubtless, "all is vanity, all what living man is" (Psalm xxxviii.), all his whole life is vanity, and nothing that belongs to him so frail as himself. Of so mean value are the things of this world, although we were to enjoy them for many ages; but being to end so quickly, and perhaps more sud-

* See 1. Paralip. xxix. what he left him towards the building of the temple.

denly than we can imagine, what account is to be made of them? O if we could but frame a true conception of the shortness of this life, how should we despise the pleasures of it! This is a matter of such importance, that God commanded the principal of his prophets, that he should go into the streets and market-places, and proclaim aloud, how frail and short was the life of man. For the prophet Isaiah, being about to prophesy of the most high and hidden mystery, which ever God revealed to man, which is the incarnation of the Eternal Word, was suddenly commanded by the Lord to lift up his voice, and "to cry aloud;" to whom the prophet replied, "What is it, O Lord, that I must cry aloud?" The Lord said that "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of it as the flowers of the field." For as the grass, which is cut in the morning, withers before night, and as the flower is quickly faded, so is the life of all flesh, the beauty and splendor of it passing and withering in a day. Upon which place says St. Jerome (S. Hieron. in comment.), "He who shall look upon the frailty of our flesh, and that every moment of an hour we increase and decrease, without ever remaining in the same state, and that even what we now speak, dictate or write, flies away with some part of our life, will not doubt to say, his flesh is grass, and the glory of it as the flower of the field." And presently after, "He that was yesterday an infant is now a boy, and will suddenly be a youth, and even until old age runs changing through uncertain conditions of life, and perceives himself first to be an old man, before he begins to admire that he is not still a boy." In another place the same saint, meditating upon the death of Nepotianus, who died in the flower of his age, breaks out into these complaints (in Epitaph. Nepot.): "O miserable condition of human nature! Vain is all that we live without Christ: all flesh is hay, and all the glory of it as the flower of the field. Where is now that comely visage? where is now the dignity of the whole body, with which, as with a fair garment, the beauty of the soul was once clothed? Alas! the lily is withered by a southern blast, and the purple of the violet turned into paleness." And immediately adds, "Why do we not ourselves consider what in time must become of us, and, whether we will or not, cannot be far off? for should our life exceed the term of nine hundred years, and that the days of Mathusalem were bestowed upon us, yet all this length of life once past (and pass it must) were nothing: and between him who lives but ten years, and him who lives a thousand, the end of life, and the unavoidable necessity of death once come, all is the same; save only he who lives longer, departs heavier loaded with his sins." This frailty, therefore, and brevity of human life, being so certain and evident, yet our Lord would have his prophet publish it together with the most hidden and unknown mystery of his incarnation, and the manner of the world's redemption, which even the most

high seraphim did not conceive possible ; and all because men will not suffer themselves to be persuaded of this truth, nor practically apprehend the shortness of their life : nay, seeing death seize upon others, yet they will not believe that it shall happen to themselves ; and although they hear of it hourly, yet it appears to them as a hidden mystery, which they cannot understand. God, therefore, commanded the prophet Isaiah, that he should proclaim and publish it with a loud voice, as a thing new and of great importance, that it might so penetrate and sink into the hearts of men. Let us, therefore, receive this truth from God himself : All flesh is grass, all age is short, all time flies, all life vanishes, and a great multitude of years are but a great nothing.

Let us also hear how true this is from those who lived the longest, and have had the greatest experience of what it is to live. Perhaps thou mayst promise thyself to live a hundred years, as though this were a long life : hearken then to holy Job, who lived two hundred and forty years, who knew best what it was to live, both in respect of his prosperity, and of his great troubles and afflictions, which make life appear longer than it is. What says he of all his years ? " My days (says he) are nothing." He calls them nothing, although they lasted almost three ages. In other places, speaking of the shortness of life, and declaring it with many comparisons and metaphors, sometimes he says, his days were more speedy than a courier, and that they passed as a ship under sail, or as an eagle which stoops furiously upon his prey ; sometimes, that they were more swift than a weaver's shuttle : in one place he compares his life to a withered leaf, blown up and down by the wind, or to dry stubble ; in another he says, that the life of man is like the flower which springs up to-day, and to-morrow is trodden under foot ; and that it flies like a shadow, without ever remaining in the same state. How poor a thing then is life, since holy Job calls it but a shadow, though then three or four times longer than at present ! And it is no wonder, since those whose life exceeded nine hundred years, who lived before the deluge, and are now most of them in hell, complain, as the wise man relates, in this manner (Sap. v.) : " What hath our pride profited us, or the pomp of our riches availed us ? All those things are passed as a shadow, or as a messenger, who runs post ; or as a ship, which breaks the unquiet waves, and leaves no track or path behind it ; or like the bird, which flies through the air, and leaves no sign after her, but with the noise of her wings beats the light wind and forces herself a passage without leaving any knowledge which way she made her flight ; or like the arrow shot at the mark, which has scarce divided the subtile element, when it closes and joins again in such a manner, as it cannot be perceived which way it went. Even so, we are hardly born, when upon a sudden we cease to be." These were the words even of

those who were damned, who lived more than eight hundred years; and if they esteemed so long a life but as a shadow, and in the instant when they died judged they were scarce born, how canst thou think to live long in a time, wherein it is much to reach the age of sixty? A life, then, of eight hundred years being no more than the flitting up and down of a little sparrow, the flight of an arrow, or, to say better, the passage of a shadow; what then are fifty years, to which perhaps thou mayst attain? Certainly, the longest term, whereto human life extends, was compared by Homer, but to the leaves of a tree, which, at the most, endure but a summer's season. Euripides judged that too much, and said, that human felicity was to be valued as the length of a day. And Demetrius Phalereus allowed it but a moment's space. Plato thought it too much to give it any being at all, and therefore calls it but the dream of a waking man. And St. John Chrysostom yet lessens that, calling it but a dream of those who sleep. It seems the saints and philosophers could find no symbol, no comparison sufficient to express the shortness of man's life; since neither a courier by land, nor a ship by sea, nor a bird in the air passes with that speed. All these things which we have now mentioned, and others, though esteemed swift, yet have not such equality of motion, but that they sometimes slacken their pace, and sometimes stand still. But the impetuous course of our life, by which it hastens to death, stops not so much as whilst we sleep; and therefore appeared to Philemius so swift and rapid, that he said, his life was no more but to be born and die, and that at our birth we issued from a dark prison, and at our death entered into a more sad and dreadful sepulchre. Take from this short life the time of sleep, and thou takest from it the third part; take from it infancy, and other accidents which hinder the sense and fruit of living, and there hardly remains the half of that nothing, which thou esteemest so much. That which Averroes (Aver. 4. Phys. tex. 13.) affirmed of time, when he said, that time was a being diminished in itself, may be well verified of life, which is in itself so little, as it is but a point in respect of eternity: and yet so many parts are taken from that point. Besides all this, dost thou think, that this piece of life which thou now enjoyest is certain? Thou deceivest thyself. For, as the wise man says, man does not know the day of his end; and therefore as fishes, when they are most secure, are then taken with the hook, and birds with the snare; so death assails us in the evil time, when we least think of it.

Consider, then, how vile are all things temporal, and how frail is all the glory of the world, being grounded upon so feeble a foundation. The goods of the earth can be no greater than is life, which gives them their value; and if that be so poor and short, what shall they be? what can the delights of man be, since his

life is but a dream, a shadow, and as the twinkling of an eye? If the most long life be so short, what can be the pleasure of that torment, by which is lost eternal happiness? What good can be of value which is sustained by a life so contemptible and full of misery? A figure of this was the statue of Nebuchadonozor, which, although made of rich metals, yet was founded upon feet of clay, so as a little stone falling upon it, overthrew it to the earth. All the greatness and riches of the world have for foundation the life of him who enjoys them, which is so frail and slippery, that not a little stone, but even the grain of a grape, has been able to ruin and overthrow it. With reason did David say, that all which is living man, is universal vanity: since the brevity of his life suffices to vilify and make vain all the goods which he is capable of enjoying. Vain are the honors, vain are the applauses, the riches and pleasures of life, which being itself so short and frail, makes all things vain which depend upon it, and so becomes itself a vanity of vanities, and a universal vanity. What account wouldst thou make of a tower founded upon a quicksand? or what safety wouldst thou hope for in a ship bored with holes? Certainly thou oughtest to give no more esteem to the things of this world, since they are founded upon a thing so unstable as this life. What can all human glory be, since life, which sustains it, has (according to David) no more consistence than smoke, or (according to St. Thomas) than a little vapor, which in a moment vanishes? And, although it should endure a thousand years, yet, coming to an end, it were equal to that which lasted but a day: for, as well the felicity of a long as a short life is but smoke and vanity, since they both pass away and conclude in death. Guericus the Dominican, a great philosopher and physician, and afterwards a most famous divine, hearing them read the fifth chapter of Genesis, wherein are recounted the sons and descendants of Adam in these terms: "The whole life of Adam was nine hundred and thirty years, and he died: The life of his son Seth was nine hundred and twelve years, and he died;" and so of the rest; began to think with himself, that if such and so great men, after so long a life, ended in death, it was not safe to lose more time in this world, but so to secure his life, that losing it here, he might find it hereafter; and with this thought entered into the order of St. Dominick, and became of a most religious life.

O what fools are men! who, seeing life so short, endeavor to live long, and not to live well; since it is a thing most certain, as Seneca observes (Epist. 22.), that every man may live well, but no man, what age soever he attains to, can live long. This folly appears more plainly from that which is said by Lactantius (Lac. lib. 6. Divin. Instit.), that this life being so short, the goods and evils of it must be likewise short, as the goods and evils of the

other must be eternal; and that God, being pleased to make an equal distribution of both, ordained, that to the short and transitory goods, which we enjoy unlawfully in this life, should succeed eternal evils in the next; and to those short evils, which we suffer here for God's sake, eternal good and happiness should follow in the other. Wherefore, Almighty God setting before us this difference between good and evil, and leaving us at liberty to choose which we please, how great a folly were it, for the not suffering of a few evils, and those so short, to lose goods so great and eternal; and for the enjoying of goods so short and transitory, to endure evils without end!

CHAPTER XIII.

What Time is, according to St. Augustine.

LET us also see what the great doctor of the church, St. Augustine (Lib. 2. Confes. cap. 25.), thought of the nature of time; which found so little estimation and being in that great wit and understanding of his, that after he had, with much subtilty, disputed what it was, he at length comes to conclude, that he knows not what it is; nay, that he knows not so much, as what it is not to know it. The most that he can reach to is, that no time is long, and that that only may be called time which is present, which is but a moment. The same is the opinion of Antoninus (Aur. Anton. l. 2.) in his philosophy, who speaks in this manner: "If thou wert to live three thousand years, and thirty thousand more above those, yet oughtest thou to remember that no man lives any other life than what he lives at present; and therefore the most long and the most short space of life is the same; that which is present being the same to all, although not that which is already past. So as it seems there is but one only point of time, and that no man can lose either that which is past or that which is to come, since no man can lose what he has not, wherefore these two things ought to be preserved in memory: the one, that from the beginning all things keep the same form, and return as it were in a circle to the same state; so, as there is no difference between the beholding of them for a hundred, for two hundred years, or for an infinite of time. The other is, that he who lives long, and he who dies shortly, lose the same thing, being both deprived of the present, of which they only are possessed, and no man loses what he has not." So much from this wise prince, who found no other substance in time but only this present moment. And St. Augustine (cap. 14.) informs us further of the being of this present

moment, of which it cannot be affirmed so much as that it is at all. These are his words:—"If the present, that it may be called time, is because it is to pass into the præterite, how can it be said to be, since the only cause, why it is, because it shall not be? so as we cannot affirm it to have a being, but inasmuch as it is a way into a not being."

Behold, then, whereunto thou trustest thy felicity; see upon what pillar of brass thou placest thy hopes; even on so slight a thing that its whole existence is in ceasing to be, and receives its being (if it have any) from its passing into nothing. For what can that have which is, and is not; ever ceasing to be, with that impetuous fury, that thou art not able to detain it for one small moment, since even during that moment it is in a perpetual motion? Let him who is in the flower of his age tell me by what power he is able to detain the years of his life but for one day, or whether he can keep the pleasure which he now enjoys but one hour from leaving him. Let him endeavor to lay hold on time; but it is in vain; he knows not where to fasten. Time has no substance, and yet runs with that violence that it will sooner draw thee after it, than thou shalt be able to keep it back. Wherefore, the same holy doctor, speaking of life, says, that the time of life is a career unto death; which is so swift, and mixed with so many deaths, that he began to doubt whether the life of mortals were to be called a life or death, and, therefore, thus discourses (Lib. 13. de Civ. cap. 10.): "From the instant that we begin to be in this body, which is to die, there is nothing operated in it but what brings on death. This is effected by the mutability of life, if that may be called a life, which only works to bring on death. For there is none who is not nearer his death this year than the last, to-day, than yesterday, now, than a little while ago; and all the time we live is subtracted from the time of living, and every day, that which remains becomes less and less; so that the time of this life is nothing else but a career to death, in which no man is permitted to make stay, or to march with more leisure, but all are driven on with equal speed." Presently after he adds, "For what else is daily and hourly done, until death, which was still coming, be consummated, and that time, which follows death, begins to be, which time was then in death, whilst there was a continual decay of life? From hence it follows, that man was never in life whilst he was in this body, which rather dies than lives, if perhaps he be not at the same time both in life and death jointly; that is, in life, which he lives until that be ended, and in death, which he dies, who is every moment deprived of some part of life." For the same reason Quintilian said, that "we died every moment before the time of death was come." And Seneca, "We err, when we look upon death, as upon a thing to succeed; since it hath both preceded, and is also

to follow ; for all that hath been before us is death. And what imports it, whether thou begin not at all, or end, since the effect of both is not to be." Every day we die, and every day we lose some part of life, and in our very growth, our life decreases and grows less, and this very day, wherein we live, we divide with death. Our life, in the Book of Wisdom, is compared to the passing of a shadow, which, as it may be said to be a kind of night, so our life may be called a kind of death ; for as the shadow has some part of light, some of darkness, so our life hath some part of death, and some of life, until it comes to end in a pure and solid death ; and since it is to end in a not being, it is very little to be regarded, especially when compared with eternity, which hath a being constant and for ever.

SECTION II.

All, as has been said, which has an end, is little, since it is to end in nothing. Why, therefore, wilt thou lose much for that which is so little, that which is true for what is false, and a substance for a dream? Hear what St. John Chrysostom says (Hom. 20. ad Pop.) : " If for having a pleasant dream only for one night, a man were to be tortured a hundred years when he were awake, who would desire such a dream? Far greater is the difference between the truth of eternity, and the dream of this life ; between the eternal years of the other world, and the transitory ones of this. Less is this life in respect of the eternal, than an hour's dream in respect of a hundred years awake ; less than a drop in respect of the whole sea. Forbear, then, some small pleasure now, that thou mayst not be deprived of all pleasure hereafter. Suffer rather some slight trouble at present, than to be tormented hereafter for all eternity ; for, as St. Augustine says, better is a little bitterness in the throat, than an eternal torment in the bowels.

All which passes in time, Christ our Redeemer calls a very little. A very little did he call the time of his passion, and all those bitter pains which he suffered in it ; a very little that of the martyrdom of his apostles, endured with so many torments : a little, a very little is all which in this life can be suffered in respect of eternal years. Although as St. Augustine says (Tract. 10. in Jo.), " This little, because we are yet in it, appears great ; but when it shall be ended, then we shall perceive how small and contemptible it is." Let us place ourselves in the end of life ; from that prospect we shall discern how small are all things, which now seem great to us. To a most observant and religious father of the Society of Jesus, called Christopher Caro, our Lord was pleased to give this lesson, that he should often consider these two things, *O how much*, and *O how little* ; that is, how much is

eternity without end, how little is the time of this life; how much is God enjoyed for ever, how little the contents of the earth, which we are to leave behind us; how much it is to reign with Christ, how little to serve our own appetite; how much is eternal glory, and how little to live long in this valley of tears. Wherefore Ecclesiasticus said, "The number of the days of man, when many, are a hundred years, and are reputed as a drop of water, and as a grain of sand. So few are our years in the day of eternity." Little will all time whatsoever appear, to merit that which is eternal. With reason did St. Bernard often inculcate to his monks that saying of St. Jerome: No labor ought to appear hard, no torments long, by which is gained the glory of eternity. To Jacob the seven years, which he served Laban, seemed short for the love he bore to Rachel; why should then the service of God for a small time seem long to us? Consider whom thou servest, and wherefore; and mark whom Jacob served, and for what. Thou servest the true God, and for eternal glory; he served a deceitful idolater, for a frail and fading beauty. Compare thy services with those of Jacob; see if thou hast served God as he served Laban (Gen. xxxi.); see if thou canst say, "By day I was scorched by heat, and by night benumbed with cold; sleep fled from mine eyes; and in this manner I served thee twenty years." If, with such fidelity, this servant of God served a pagan, how oughtest thou to serve God himself? If thou beest truly his servant, all ought to seem little to thee, since thou servest so good a master, and for so great a reward.

Look how thou employest thy years, which being but few for the meriting of so great a thing as eternity, thou sufferest them to pass through thy fingers, without any profit at all. Well, says St. Augustine (Lib. 10. contra Faust. c. 6.), was the time of this life signified by the spinning of the destinies or fatal sisters, who were feigned by the wise ancients, to spin out the thread of life. Time past was that which was wound up, and rolled upon the spindle; time to come, the flax which remained to spin upon the distaff; and the present that which passed between the fingers; for truly we know not how to employ our time, in filling our hands with holy works, but suffer it, without reflecting, to pass through our fingers, in matters of no substance or profit. But better did David declare this ill employment of time, when he said (Ps. lxxxix.), "Our years did meditate;" or, as another lection has it, "Did exercise as the spiders;" because spiders spin not wool or flax, but the excretions of their own entrails, consuming and disembowelling themselves to weave a web, which they work with their feet, of so slight a substance, that in a moment it is rent in pieces; and of so little profit, that it serves for no other use than to catch flies. The life of man is full of vain labors, vexations of various thoughts, plots, suspicions,

fears and cares, in which it is wholly exercised and employed, linking and weaving one care into another, still troubling itself with more, being scarcely freed from one employment when it entangles itself in another ; and also so ill ordered and composed, as if they had been managed by feet instead of hands ; still adding labor to labor, and toil to toil, as the spider does one thread to another ; first thinking how to obtain what we desire, then how to defend it, after how to advance and increase it, then how to defend it, and lastly how to enjoy it ; and yet, in conclusion, all falls to pieces in the handling, and becomes nothing. What labor does it cost the poor spider to weave his web, passing incessantly from one part to another, and often returning to the same place where he began ; consuming himself with threads drawn from his proper entrails, for the forming of his pavilion, which with many journeys having placed on high, and at last finished this goodly artifice, one touch of a broom defaces and brings to the ground all his labor. Just such are the employments of human life, of much toil, and of little profit, robbing us of sleep, and filling us with cares and anxieties, spending the most part of our time in useless projects and vain imaginations, which of themselves fall to nothing, and in the end vanish without effect. For which reason David said, our lives meditated, as the spiders, who labor and toil all day in making of cobwebs : so the life of man passeth in the continual cares and thoughts of what he is to be, what to endeavor, what to obtain, and all (as the wise man says) is vanity of vanities and affliction of spirit ; and for those things, which concern the service of God, we only sometimes afford them our thoughts, but seldom our works. With much reason did Aristotle say, that the hope of our life yet to come was "like the dream of one who watches." And Plato, in the like manner, calls the life past, a "dream of people awake." For in this both human hope and life resemble a dream, that neither of them have either being or subsistence ; and there is no man, who, after a discourse within himself of his life past, will not say, that dreams and truths are the same thing, since he possesses no more of what he once enjoyed, than of what he dreamed ; all his delights and pleasures appearing so short to him, that their beginning and ending seemed to be joined together without a medium.

CHAPTER XIV.

Time is the Occasion of Eternity; and how a Christian ought to benefit himself by it.

TIME, although short, frail and slippery, yet has one condition most precious, which is to be the occasion of eternity; since by it we gain that in a small time, which we are to enjoy for ever. For this reason, when St. John said, that *Time is at hand*, the Greek renders it, *Occasion is at hand*; because the time of this life is the occasion of gaining eternity, and that once past, there will be no remedy or hope left of obtaining the other. Let us, therefore, endeavor to employ our time well, and not lose the opportunity of so great a good, whose loss is irreparable, and will be lamented with eternal, but unprofitable complaints. Let us consider how great is the good, which occasion brings along with it, and the resentment which is usually caused by the loss of it, that we may from thence know how to profit ourselves by temporal occasions, in order to eternal happiness, and that we may be freed from that inconsolable and fruitless repentance of the damned, who have made no use of it. It is a great business this of our salvation, and depends wholly upon the swift time of this life, which once past is irrevocable, and the end of it most uncertain; and, therefore, we ought with a hundred eyes to watch occasion, that it pass us not, and with a hundred hands to lay hold on it. The ancients, knowing the importance of it, feigned it to be a goddess, thereby to declare the great good (when timely apprehended) which it brought to mankind, whose image they adored in this mysterious figure. (In Epig. Græc.) They placed it upon a wheel, which continually moved round; it had wings at the feet, to denote the swiftness with which it passed; the face was not seen, but covered with long hair, which on the forehead grew thick and bushy; whereby was signified, that it was hard to know when occasion happened, but being present easy to lay hold on it: the hinder part of the head was bald, because, once past, it had nothing whereby to retain it. Ausonius (Auson. in Epig.), to signify the effect which it leaves with those who suffer it to slip from them, says, that it drew behind it *Metanæa*, that is, repentance, which only remains with those who know not how to use it. (Vide Joan. David in lib. de occasione arrepta. In Aph.) Others represented occasion with hands busy in distributing riches and precious gifts, but accompanied with time, in the habit of a traveller, which, not with two, but with four wings, carried it along; to signify the great haste with which it passed. Wherefore Hippocrates, with much reason, calls occasion pre-

precipitate, because it runs with as great violence as he falls who throws himself headlong from a high rock. Let us place in the midst of eternity, the longest time of human life; let it be a hundred, two hundred, or nine hundred years, as long as the life of man before the deluge; yet it will then appear but as an instant; and he who shall cast his eyes upon the immensity of eternal duration, will remain astonished, that a thing so short, so small, so precipitate, should be the occasion of that which is so long, so great and so stable. Since, therefore, the whole time of this life is so short for the gaining of eternity, let us resolve not to lose it, especially since we have no assurance how long it will last; and although we were certain to live yet a hundred years longer, we ought not to spare one moment from the gaining of eternity. But being uncertain how long we are to live, and perhaps shall die to-morrow, how can we be so careless as to let the occasion of securing our glory pass, which hereafter will never be offered? If a skilful workman were commanded by some great prince, that, upon pain of death, he should have in readiness some excellent piece of his work against such a time as it should be called for, and that, although a year's time were requisite to perfect it, yet it might perhaps be called for sooner, certainly that artist would with all speed finish the piece, the neglect being no less than the forfeit of his life. Since, then, our life eternal consists in being furnished with the grace of God, and in preserving his divine image engraven in our souls, how can we be so careless to let pass the occasion of our salvation?

Theophrastus and Democritus called time a most precious expense: Terence, the first and principal of all things. Zeno said, that "there was nothing which men wanted more, nor whereof they stood in greater need than time." Pliny made that account of it, that he would not so much as one moment of it should be lost: and therefore reprehended his nephew for spending a short time in walking for his recreation, telling him that those hours might be better employed: and being present when the same nephew caused one, who in reading pronounced a word with an ill accent, to repeat it again, admonished him that too much time was lost in that useless repetition. Seneca esteemed time above all price and value, and in this manner says, "Redeem thyself to thyself; recover and preserve that time, which hitherto hath been taken, surprised or slipped from thee. For whom wilt thou give me, that shall set a price upon time, or give a value to a day, who understands himself daily to die?" If, therefore, the gentiles, who had no hope by time to purchase eternity, made so great account of it, what shall we Christians, to whom it is an occasion of eternal happiness? Let us, therefore, hear St. Bernard. "There is nothing (says he) more precious than time. But alas! nothing at this day is more vilified. A day of salvation is past, and no

man reflects on it, no man thinks, no man complains that he has lost a day, which shall never return. But as a hair from the head, so a moment of time shall not perish." The same saint, also grieving to see a thing so precious so much misspent, speaks in this manner: "Let no man make a small esteem of the time which is spent in idle words. Say some, We may yet chat and talk until this hour be past. O wretched speech, *Until this hour be past!* This being the hour, which the goodness of thy Creator has bestowed upon thee, that in it thou mayst do penance for thy sins, obtain pardon, acquire grace, and merit glory. O lamentable speech, *Whilst this hour passes!* this being the hour wherein thou mayst gain divine mercy and commiseration." In another part he speaks much to the same purpose; exhorting us to benefit ourselves by the time of this life. His words are these (Serm. 75. in Cant.): "Whilst we have time, let us do good to all men, especially since our Lord said plainly, that the night would come, when no man could work. Art thou perhaps to find some other time in the world to come, wherein thou mayst seek God, and wherein thou mayst do good? This being the time wherein he hath promised to remember thee, and is therefore the day of mercy; because here our God and King hath long ago wrought thy salvation in the midst of the earth: go, then, and expect thy salvation in the midst of hell. What possibility dost thou dream of obtaining pardon in the midst of eternal flames, when the time of mercy is already past? No sacrifice for sin remains for thee, being dead in sin; no more shall the Son of God be crucified for thee. Once he died, and shall now die no more. That blood which he spilled upon the earth shall not descend into hell; the sinners of the earth have drunk it up; there is no part left for the devils, or for sinners, who are the companions of devils, wherewith to quench their flames. Once descended thither, not the blood, but the soul of Christ; this only visit, made by the presence of the soul, when the body hung lifeless upon the cross, was the portion of those who were in prison. The blood watered the dry land; the blood was poured upon the thirsty earth, and did, as it were, inebriate it. The blood wrought peace for those who were upon earth, and those who were in heaven; but not for those who were in hell beneath the earth. Once only, as we have said, the soul went thither, and made in part redemption (he is speaking of the souls of the holy fathers, who were in Limbo), that even for that moment the works of charity might not be wanting; but it passed no farther. Now is the time acceptable; now is the time fit wherein to seek God: and certainly, he that seeks him shall find him, if he seek him when and where be ought." All this from St. Bernard.

SECTION II.

Consider what an eternal repentance will follow thee, if thou makest not use of this occasion of time, for the purchasing of the kingdom of heaven; especially when thou shalt see that with so little ado thou mightst have gained that everlasting glory, which, to satisfy a short pleasure, thou has lost for ever. In what fury and madness was Esau (Gen. xix.) when he reflected, that his younger brother had got the blessing of the first-born, by his own base selling his birthright for a dish of lentils; he cried out and tore himself for spite and anger. Behold thyself in this mirror, who, for one vile and short pleasure hast sold the kingdom of heaven. If God had then thrown thee into hell, what wouldst thou have done, but lamented that with eternal tears, which in so short a time was lost? Cain, when he perceived that he and his posterity were cursed, and made infamous for not knowing how to benefit himself by that occasion (Ibid. ix.) which was first offered to him and made use of by his brother, what resentment had he then, or ought to have had? Measure by this the sense of a damned person, who, for not making use of the time of this life, shall see himself cursed by God for an eternity, and others, far less than himself, made blessed and rewarded in heaven. The sons-in-law of Lot, when they saw they might have escaped the fire, and that, being invited, they had rejected and laughed at the counsel of their father-in-law, when afterwards they perceived it to rain fire and sulphur upon them and their cities, what grief and vexation had they for refusing the benefit of so fair an occasion offered at their own doors! O what sorrow, what pain, what madness, what desperation shall seize upon a damned creature, when he shall call to mind how often he had been invited by Christ to salvation, and shall now feel a tempest of fire and sulphur pouring down upon him for ever in hell! King Hannon, who had so good an occasion to preserve that peace, whereunto he was entreated and invited by David, when after he saw his cities ruined, the inhabitants burned like bricks in a furnace, some thrashed to death, others torn in pieces, what would he have given to have made use in time of so fair an offer, or of holding friendship with so great a king? But what is this in respect of what a sinner shall feel, when he shall see himself burned in hell-fire, become an eternal enemy of the king of heaven, and deprived for ever of reigning with his blessed saints? what despite, what grief of heart shall he then have! The evil thief who was crucified with the Saviour of the world, what doth he now endure for refusing that good occasion which his companion embraced? what a repentance hath now the rich glutton for not laying hold of so great an opportunity, offered him at his

own home, when Lazarus demanded an alms from him, by giving of which he might have redeemed his sins? But he let it pass, being more inhuman than his dogs, who suffered not the poor leper to depart without first licking his sores, using mercy with him, with whom their master used none. What will he now say, when all things have failed him, even one drop of cold water to cool his scorched and inflamed tongue, and all for denying so poor an alms as the crumbs which fell from his table? What madness, what spite, what despair do now torment him for refusing, when time was, so easy a means to gain his salvation!

Wherefore, although it be true, that the whole time of our life is an occasion of obtaining eternal glory, yet in the passage of life there are some particular actions and successes, upon which our salvation does more especially depend, by which we either disoblige God Almighty by rejecting them, or, by embracing them, oblige him (if I may so say) to favor us. Such a one was that of holy Joseph, who, rather than he would offend his Creator, fled from his wanton mistress, and left his garment in her hands. This was an excellent act, by which he much obliged God Almighty, and deserved to receive those favors which were afterwards bestowed upon him. In the same manner, Susannah laid hold on a great occasion for the saving of her soul, when she chose rather to die, than to consent to the filthy pleasure, whereto she was invited by those wicked elders. No opportunity ought to pass us without showing ourselves quick and active in laying hold of it, greedy of pleasing God Almighty, obliging him by some brave and heroical act, with which occasion shall present us. Wherefore the wise man said (Eccl. xiii.), "Be not defrauded of thy good day, and let no portion of a good gift overslip thee." Tully defined occasion to be "a part of time fitted for the doing of something." Mithridates said, "it was the mother of all things which were to be done;" and Polybius, "that which ruled all human affairs." And there is no doubt, but some conjunctures of times happen, which present us with great occasions of merit, by working excellent virtues and performing most heroical actions, which, if made good use of, do much assure our salvation. Wherefore, it is by some placed among the signs of predestination, to have performed some great and noble act of virtue. Let us see what benefit some have made of occasion in temporal business, that we may not be less careful and solicitous in matters eternal. With what diligence did Rachel run to hide and cover the idols, which she had stolen from her father? With what diligence did Abigail go forth to meet David, omitting nothing whereby she might appease his fury? and certainly if she had protracted never so little time, she had run into evident danger of losing the lives of herself, her husband and family. With what solicitude did Abraham pursue the five kings who

carried away captive his nephew Lot? With what speed did Saul gather together his army for the relief of Jabes Galaad? It behoves us no less to gain heaven. Let us not be more dull and slow in gaining that, than they were in getting and procuring things of the earth. Let us hear with what diligence and haste the wise man advises us to accomplish the promise we have made to a mortal man (Prov. vi.): "My son, if thou shalt be surety for a friend, and have struck hands with a stranger, thou hast ensnared thyself in the words of thy mouth, and art taken in thy own speeches. Do, therefore, my son, what I say unto thee, and deliver thyself, because thou art fallen into the hands of thy neighbors. Run, make haste, awake thy friend, give no sleep to thy eyes, nor let thy eyelids slumber: rid thyself from his hands, as the mountain-goat or the bird from the hand of the hunter." Those who are engaged to the devil by their sins, let them mark with what diligence they ought to free themselves, without losing time or occasion; and those who are obliged to God for his infinite benefits, and have passed to him their promises of amendment, let them mark how they ought to satisfy them, by making use of all possible means of being reconciled to him: let them make haste, as the wise man says, let them not be tepid and slow, let them not give sleep to their eyes, or close their eyelids, that they may, without losing the least occasion, escape from hell and the slavery of Satan. Pity it is that any occasion should slip from us without benefit: a lamentable misery that our lives should pass away in the things of the earth, without seeking after those of heaven; man's life being so short and narrow for the meriting of a thing so long and infinite, as are the joys of eternity. With reason did the apostle admonish us: "This I say unto you, brethren, time is short: that which remains is, that those who have wives, be as if they had them not, and those who weep, as if they did not weep, and those who rejoice, as if they rejoiced not, and those who buy, as if they possessed not, and those who use this world, as if they used it not; because the figure of this world passes." The apostle, considering the great shortness of time, wills us to settle ourselves in the matters of our salvation, and of the other life, that we remain in those of this as strangers, using them as if we used them not.

Let us consider, then, that if we suffer occasion in the short time of this life to escape us, all hope of remedy will fail us in the next. It is not void of instruction which is feigned by the ancients, that Jupiter bestowed upon a certain person a vessel filled with all sorts of goods and blessings; who, overjoyed with the greatness of the gift, which contained all that was to be wished for, and impatient of enjoying them one by one, and every good in its proper time and season, would needs have them all at once. Whereupon he hastily and indiscreetly opened the

vessel; but they were no sooner discovered, but all flew into the air and vanished, and for all the diligence and haste he was able to use in shutting it, he could retain none but hope, which alone remained behind. But far otherwise is it with the occasion of our salvation; which, although it contains all happiness and blessings, yet, being suffered to pass, there remains not behind so much as hope, but in the place of it repentance, despair and eternal sorrow, and so much the more in that it happens by our own fault. When king Joas smote the ground thrice, and was told by the prophet Elizeus, that if he had smitten it six or seven times, he had ruined and utterly made an end of the Syrians, what grief and affliction did he conceive in his mind, that, having had an occasion of so much happiness, he had not made use of it, although the misfortune chanced without his fault! But the miserable damned in hell, when they shall perceive, that by their own fault they have lost the occasion of so great blessings as are those of heaven, it is incredible what grief and resentment shall possess them.

CHAPTER XV.

What is Time, according to Plato and Plotinus, and how deceitful is all that which is Temporal.

THAT we may yet better understand the smallness and baseness of all that is temporal, I will not pass in silence the description of time made by Plotinus, a famous philosopher amongst the Platonics, who says, that "time is an image, or a shadow of eternity," which is conformable to Holy Scripture; not only to that of David, when he says, "Man passes in a figure," that is, in time; but to that of the wise man, whod defines time in these words (Sap. ii.): "Our time is the passing of a shadow;" which is no more than the imperfect, movable and vain image of a thing consistent and solid. Job (ch. viii.) also says, "As a shadow are our days upon the earth." And the prophet David elsewhere: "My days have slid away as a shadow." And in many other places of Scripture the same comparison is used, to signify the swiftness of time, and the vanity of our life. Neither is it without mystery, that the same comparison is so often used in those sacred writings. For truly, few comparisons can be found more apt and proportionable for the expressing of what is time and eternity, than that of the statue and the shadow of it. For, as a statue remains, for many years and ages, firm, stable and immovable, without increase or diminution, whilst the shadow is in continual motion, now greater, now lesser; so it is

with time and eternity. Eternity is firm, fixed and immovable, without receiving less or more: time is ever moving and changing as the shadow, which is great in the morning, less at mid-day, and towards night returns to its former greatness, every moment changing and moving from one side to another. In the same manner, the life of man has no instant fixed, but still goes on in perpetual changes, and in the greatest prosperity is for the most part shortest. Aman (Esth. iii. and vii.), the same day he thought to sit at the table of king Assuerus, by whom he had been exalted above all the princes of the kingdom, was ignominiously hanged. Holofernes (Jud. xiii.), when he hoped to enjoy the best day of his life, was miserably beheaded by a woman. King Baltassar (Dan. v.), in the most solemn and celebrated day of his whole reign, wherein he made ostentation of his great riches, was slain by the Persians. Herod (Acts xii.), when he most desired to show his majesty, being clothed in a rich habit of tissue, embroidered with gold, and by the acclamations of the people saluted as a god, was mortally struck from heaven. There is nothing constant in this life. The moon has every month her changes; but the life of man has them every day, every hour. Now he is sick, now in health; now sorrowful, now merry; now choleric, now fearful: insomuch as Sinesius (Hymn. vi.), not without reason, compared his life to Euripus, a strait of the sea, which ebbs and flows seven times a day; as the most constant (which is the most just) man in the world falls every day seven times. The shadow, wheresoever it passes, leaves no track behind it; and of the greatest personages in the world, when they are once dead, there remains no more than if they had never lived. How many preceding emperors in the Assyrian monarchy were lords of the world, as well as Alexander; and now we remain not only ignorant of their monuments, but know not so much as their names? And of the same great Alexander, what have we at this day, except the vain noise of his fame? Yet that company of philosophers (Petrus Alfonsus et Rikelius, de noviss. art. 4.) informs us, who the day following assembled at his dead corpse. One of them said, "Yesterday the whole circumference of the world sufficed not Alexander; this day two yards of ground serve his turn." Another in admiration cried out, "Yesterday Alexander was able to redeem innumerable people from the hand of death; this day he cannot free himself." A third exclaims, "Yesterday Alexander oppressed the whole earth, and this day the earth oppresses him, and there is no footstep in it left by which he passed."

Moreover, how great is the difference between a statue of gold or marble and the shadow! That is solid, and of a precious substance; and this has no being or body. In the same manner, the life eternal is most precious, and of great concernment; the tem-

poral vain and miserable, without substance. The shadow has no other being but to be a privation of the most excellent quality in nature, and of the most beautiful thing the universe produces, which is the light of the sun. In the same manner, this life, without substance or being, is a privation of our greatest happiness. Wherefore Job said (ch. ix.) his days fled away, and his eyes saw not what was good. This said he, who was a prince, and possessed great riches, and many servants, and a numerous family; and yet he says, that in his life he saw not what was good; which he might say with much truth, because the goods of this life are not to be called such; and if they were, yet the pleasures of them endure so short a space, that they are done before we are sensible of them; and if they should continue some time, yet, being subject to end, they are to be esteemed as if they were not. This was confessed by a certain cavalier called Rowland (Hist. de S. Dom.), who, having been present at a feast celebrated with great cost and elegance, to the high satisfaction of the invited guests, at night, when he returned home, cried out with much bitterness of spirit, "Where is the feast we had to-day? where is the glory of it? how is this day passed without leaving any trace behind it? Even so shall the rest of this life pass, without leaving any thing to succeed it, but eternal sorrow." This consideration sufficed to make him change his life, and the next day to enter into religion. And as in a shadow all is obscurity, so this life is full of darkness and deceit. Whereupon Zacharias said, that men sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. Much are we deceived, whilst we live in this body of death, since this life, although short, appears long to us, and being miserable, yet we are pleased and content with it; and being nothing, yet it seems as if it were all things; and there is not any danger which men undergo not for the love they bear it, even to the hazard of eternity. Doubtless this is the most prejudicial quality of temporal life, that, having in itself no truth or reality, yet it paints and sets forth that false ware, which it has, with much beauty and lustre, to our perdition. Wherefore *Æschylus* said, that it was not only a shadow of life, but also a shadow of smoke, which blinds and smuts, and is a thing so inconstant and vain; which is also suitable to that of *David*, when he said, "that his days vanished like smoke, and grew towards an end like a shadow:" joining together the shadow and smoke, two things the most vain of any in the world. Even *Pindar* exaggerates it yet more, saying, that it was no shadow, but the dream of a shadow: and what is it else but to dream, to persuade one's self that this life is long, and hope for prosperity in it? This certainly is the greatest deceit which is put upon man, and the chief cause of all his evils, that he suffers not himself to be persuaded what life is, and the shortness of it. For, as the shadow is nothing less than

the statue whose shadow it is, yet appears like it, and is the figure of it; so, although this life be most short, and nothing less than eternity, yet it looks like it, and to us it seems as if it were eternal. This is a most hurtful and costly deception. For if life should appear what it is, and not lie to us, we should not put our trust in it, nor make such esteem of those goods and blessings which it promises, which in themselves are so deceitful and uncertain; but being, as it is, an image and a shadow, all that it proposes to us is but feigned and dissembled, promising great happiness, when it is only full of misery and calamity, although disguised in such a manner as we know them not. How contented goes the bride to her wedding, and yet, within a short time, laments her unfortunate choice! with what gust does the ambitious man enter upon his office, which is but a seminary of future sorrow and vexation! what joy do those riches bring along with them, which, in the end, are to be the death of the possessor! All is deceit, dissimulation, falsehood and prejudice; and yet we, like frantic people, are not sensible of our mischiefs. To how many infirmities is the body of a man exposed! with what imaginations is he afflicted and deceived! with how many labors and toils does he daily wrestle! with what thoughts and apprehensions does he torment himself! what dangers of body and soul does he run into! what fopperies is he forced to behold! what injuries to suffer! what necessities and afflictions! Nay, such is our whole life, that it seemed to St. Bernard (*Sermo de Ascen. Domini*) little less evil than that of hell, but only for the hope we have of heaven. Our infancy is full of ignorance and fears, our youth of sins, our age of sorrow, and our whole life of dangers. There is none content with his condition, but he who will die whilst he lives; insomuch that life cannot be good, unless it resemble death. Finally, as the shadow is in such manner an image, as it represents all things to the contrary, so as he who shall place himself between the statue and the shadow, shall perceive that that which is on the right hand of the statue, the shadow represents upon the left, and what it has upon the left, the shadow has upon the right; so time is in such manner the image of eternity, as it has all its properties to the contrary. Eternity has no end; but life and time have a speedy one. Eternity has no change; but nothing is more mutable than time. Eternity suffers no comparison by reason of its infinite greatness; but life, and all the goods of it, are short and little, and derived from the earth, which is but a point.

THE
SECOND BOOK
OF THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TEMPORAL AND
ETERNAL.

CHAPTER I.

Of the End of Temporal Life.

LET us now consider how contrary to the conditions of eternity are those which accompany this our miserable life. Let us begin with the first, which is to be limited, and subject to an end : in which two things are to be considered—the end, and the manner of it ; which, perhaps, is of more misery than the end itself. And truly, although the end of life should fall under human election, and that it were in the power of man to make choice how many years he would continue in life, and after what manner he would then leave it, and that it might conclude some other way than by death or sickness, yet, the consideration that it, and all things temporal, were to perish, and at last to have an end, were sufficient to make us despise it, and that very thought would drown all the pleasures and contents which it could afford us. For, as all things are of greater or less esteem, according to the length and shortness of their duration, so life, being to end, be it in what manner soever, is much to be disvalued. A fair vessel of crystal, if it were as consistent and durable as gold, were more precious than gold itself ; but being frail and subject to break, it loses its estimation ; and although of itself it might last long, yet, being capable, by some careless mischance, of being broken, it becomes of much less value. In the same manner, our life, which is much more frail than glass, being subject to perish by a thousand accidents, and though none of them should happen, could not long continue, since it consumes itself, must needs, together with those temporal goods which attend it, be most contemptible. But, considering that the ending of it is by the way of death, infirmi-

ties and misfortunes, which are the harbingers and prepare the way for death, it is to be admired, that man, who knows he is to die, makes account of temporal felicity, seeing the misery in which the prosperity of this world, and the majesty of the greatest monarchs, are at last to finish. Wherein ended king Antiochus (1 Machab. vi. 2 Machab. ix.), lord of so many provinces, but in a disconsolate and mortal melancholy; in a perpetual waking, which, with want of sleep, bereft him of his judgment; in a grievous torture in his belly, which forced him to void his very entrails; in a perpetual pain in his bones, that he was not able to move? And he who seemed to command the waves of the sea, and that the highest mountains of the earth hung upon his fingers' ends; whose majesty was once lifted up above all human power, could not then preserve himself in his own kingdom, nor move one pace from the place where they laid him; he who clothed himself in soft silks and pure linens, he whose garments were more fragrant than the most precious spices, cast now such a smell from his putrified members, that none could endure his presence; and being yet alive, his whole body swarmed with loathsome vermin, his flesh dropped away by pieces, and he above all remained distracted in his wits, raging with despite and madness. Let us now consider Antiochus in all his pomp and glory, glittering in gold, and dazzling the eyes of the beholders with the splendor of his diamonds and precious jewels, mounted upon a stately courser, commanding over numerous armies, and making the very earth tremble under him. Let us then behold him in his bed, pale and wan, his strength and spirits spent, his loathsome body flowing with worms and corruption, forsaken by his own people, by reason of his pestilential and poisonous stink, which infected his whole camp, and finally dying mad, and in a rage. Who, seeing such a death, would wish the felicity of his life? who, with the condition of his misery, would desire his fortune? See, then, wherein the goods of this life conclude. And as the clear and sweet waters of Jordan end in the filthy mud of the Dead Sea, and are swallowed up in that noisome bitumen; so the greatest splendor of this life concludes in death, and those loathsome diseases which usually accompany it. Behold in what a sink of filth ended the two Herods (Acts 12. Vide Josephum), most potent princes, Ascalonita and Agrippa. This, who clothed himself in tissue, and boasted a majesty above human, died devoured by worms, which, whilst he yet lived, fed upon his corrupted and aposthumated flesh, flowing with horrible filth and matter. Neither came the other Ascalonita to finish his days more happily, being consumed by vermin, which, by little and little, deprived him both of his life and kingdom. King Achab (3 Reg. xx.), conqueror of the king of Syria and thirty-two other princes, died wounded by a chance arrow, which pierced his body, and

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stained his royal chariot with his black gore, which was afterwards licked up by hungry dogs, as if he had been some savage beast. Neither died his son Joram (3 Reg. xxii.) a more fortunate death, who was run through the heart with a sword, and his body left in the field to be devoured by birds and beasts of prey; wanting at his death seven feet of earth to cover him, who in life commanded a kingdom. Who could have known Cæsar, who had first seen him triumph over the conquered world, and then beheld him gasping for a little breath, and weltering in his own blood, which flowed from three-and-twenty wounds, opened by so many stabs? Who could believe it were the same Cyrus, he who subdued the Medes, conquered the Assyrian and Chaldean empires; he who amazed the world with thirty years' success of continual victories, now taken prisoner and put to an ignominious death by the command of a woman? Who could think it were the same Alexander (Plut. in ejus vita) who, in so short a time, subjugated the Persians, Indians, and the best part of the then known world, and should afterwards behold him conquered by a fever, feeble, exhausted in body, dejected in spirit, dried up and parched with thirst, without taste in his mouth, or content in his life; his eyes sunk, his nose sharp, his tongue cleaving to his palate, not being able to pronounce one word? What an amazement is it that the heat of a poor fever should consume the mightiest power and fortune of the world; and that the greatest of temporal and human prosperities should be drowned by the overflowing of one irregular and inordinate humor!

How great a monster is human life, since it consists of so disproportionate parts, the uncertain felicity of our whole life ending in a most certain misery! How prodigious were that monster, which should have one arm of a man, and the other of an elephant; one foot of a horse, and the other of a bear! Truly, the parts of this life are not much more suitable. Who would marry a woman, though of a comely and well-proportioned body, who had the head of an ugly dragon? Certainly, although she had a great dowry, none would covet such a companion. Wherefore then do we wed ourselves to this life, which, although it seems to carry along with it much content and happiness, yet is in effect no less a monster; since, although the body appears to us beautiful and pleasant, yet the end of it is horrible, and full of misery? And therefore a philosopher said well, that the end of things was their head; and as men were to be known and distinguished by their faces, so things by their end; and, therefore, whoever will know what life is, let him look upon the end. And what end of life is not full of misery? Let no man flatter himself with the vigor of his health, with the abundance of his riches, with the splendor of his authority, with the greatness of his fortune; for by how much he is more fortunate, by so much

shall he be more miserable ; since his whole life is to end in misery. Wherefore Agesilaus (Plutar. in ejus vita), hearing the king of Persia cried up for a most fortunate and happy prince, reprehended those who extolled him, saying, " Have patience ; for even king Priam, whose end was so lamentable, was not unfortunate at the age of the king of Persia : " giving us to understand, that the most happy were not to be envied whilst they lived, by reason of the uncertainty of that end whereto they are subject. How many as yet appear most happy, whose death will shortly discover the infelicity of their lives ! Epaminondas (Id. in Apoph. Græcis), when they asked him who was the greatest captain, Cabrias Iphicrates, or himself, answered, that whilst they lived no man could judge, but that the last day of their lives would deliver the sentence, and give each one their due. Let no man be deceived in beholding the prosperity of a rich man ; let him not measure his felicity by what he sees at present, but by the end, wherein he shall conclude ; not by the sumptuousness of his palaces, not by the multitude of his servants, not by the elegance of his apparel, not by the lustre of his dignity ; but let him expect the end of that which he so much admires, and he shall then perceive him at best to die in his bed, dejected, dismayed, and struggling with the pangs and anxieties of death ; and if so, he comes off well ; otherwise the daggers of his enemy, the teeth of some wild beast, or a tile thrown upon his head by some violent wind, may serve to make an end of him, when he least thinks of it. This reason tells us, although we had no experience of it. But we see it daily confirmed by the testimony of those who are already in the gates of death ; and no man can better judge of life, than he who stands with his back towards it. Mago (Dionysius Carthus. de noviss. Art. 5.), a famous captain amongst the Carthaginians, and brother to the great Hannibal, being mortally wounded, confessed this truth to his brother, saying, " O how great a madness it is to glory in an eminent command ! The state of the most powerful is subject to most impetuous storms, whose end is to be sunk and overthrown. O how wavering and uncertain is the height of the greatest honors ! False is the hope of man, and vain is all his glory, affected with feigned and fawning flatteries. O uncertain life, due to perpetual toil and labor ! what does it now profit me to have fired so many stately and lofty buildings, to have destroyed so many cities and their people ? What does it now profit me (O brother !) to have raised so many costly palaces of marble, when I now die in the open field, and in the sight of heaven ? O how many things dost thou now think of doing, not knowing the bitterness of their end ! Thou beholdest me now dying, and know that thou also shalt quickly follow me. "

SECTION II.

But let us forbear to look upon those several kinds of death, which are incident to human nature. Let us only consider that which is esteemed the most happy, when we come to die not suddenly, nor by violence, but by some infirmity, which leisurely makes an end of us, or by a pure resolution, which naturally brings death along with it. What greater misery of man's life than this, that that death should be accounted happy; not that it is so, but because it is less miserable than others? for what grief and sorrow does he not pass, who dies in this manner? how do the accidents of his infirmities afflict him? The heat of his fever, which scorches his entrails; the thirst of his mouth, which suffers him not to speak; the pain of his head, which hinders his attention; the sadness and melancholy of his heart, proceeding from the apprehension that he is to die; besides other grievous accidents, which are usually more in number than a human body has members to suffer, together with remedies which are commonly no less painful than the diseases themselves. To this add the grief of leaving those he loves best; and, above all, the uncertainty whither he is to go, to heaven or hell. And if only the memory of death be said to be bitter, what shall be the experience? Saul, who was a man of great courage, only because it was told him that the next day he was to die, fell half dead upon the ground with fear. For what news can be more terrible to a sinner, than that he is to die, to leave all his pleasure in death, and to give an account to God for his life past? If lots were to be cast, whether one should have his flesh plucked off with burning pincers, or be made a king, with what fear and anxiety of mind would that man expect the issue! How then shall he look, who in the agony of death wrestles with eternity, and within two hours' space looks for glory or torments without end? What life can be counted happy, if that be happy which ends with so much misery? If we will not believe this, let us ask him who is now passing the trances of death, what his opinion is of life. Let us now inquire of him, when he lies with his breast raised, his eyes sunk, his feet dead, his knees cold, his visage pale, his pulse without motion, his breath short, a crucifix in one hand, and a taper in the other; those who assist at his death bidding him say, Jesus, Jesus, and advising him to make an act of contrition; what will this man say his life was, but by how much more prosperous, by so much more vain, and that all his felicity was false and deceitful, since it came to conclude in such a period? What would he now take for all the honors of this world? Certainly, I believe he would part with them at an easy rate. Nay, if they had been offensive to God Almighty, he would give all in his power never to have enjoyed them, and would willingly

change them all for one confession well made. Philip III. was of this mind, and would at that time have exchanged his being monarch of all Spain, and lord of so many kingdoms in the four parts of the world, for the porter's key of some poor monastery. Death is a great discoverer of truth. What thou wouldst then wish to have been, be now, whilst it is in thy power. A fool thou art, if thou neglect it now when thou mayst, and then wish it when it is too late. He who, to the hour of his death, has enjoyed all the delights the world can give him, at that hour what remains with him? Nothing; or, if any thing, a greater grief. And what of all his penances and labors suffered for Christ? Certainly, if he had endured more than all the martyrs, he shall then feel no pain or grief of them all, but much comfort. Judge, then, if it shall not be better for thee to do that now, which thou shalt then know to have been the better. Consider of how little substance all temporal things will appear, when thou shalt be in the light of eternal. The honors, which they have given thee, shall be no more thine; the pleasures, wherein thou hast delighted, can be no more thine; thy riches are to be another's. See, then, whether the happiness of this life, which is not so long as life itself, be of that value, that for it we should part with eternal felicity.

I beseech thee, ponder what is life, and what is death. Life is the passing of a shadow, short, troublesome and dangerous; a place which God has given us in time, for the deserving of eternity. Consider with thyself, why God leads us about in the circuit of this life, when he might at the first instant have placed us in heaven. Was it, perhaps, that we should here misspend our time, and, like beasts, wallow in the base pleasures of our senses, and daily invent new chimeras of vain and frivolous honors? No, certainly it was not; but that by virtuous actions we might gain heaven, show what we owe to our Creator, and in the midst of the troubles and afflictions of this life, discover how loyal and faithful we are to our God. For this he placed us in the lists, that we should take his part, and defend his honor; for this he entered us into this militia and warfare (for, as Job says, "The life of man is a warfare upon earth"), that here we might fight for him, and, in the midst of his and our enemies, show how true and faithful we are to him. Were it fit, that a soldier, in the time of battle, should stand disarmed, passing away his time at dice on a drum-head? and what laughter would that Roman gladiator cause, who, entering into the place of combat, should sit down upon the arena, and throw away his arms! This does he who seeks his ease in this life, and sets his affections upon the things of the earth, not endeavoring for those of heaven, nor thinking upon death, where he is to end. A peregrination is this life; and what passenger is so besotted with the pleasures of the way, that he

forgets the place whither he is to go? How comest thou then to forget death, whither thou travellest with speed, and canst not, though thou desirest, rest one small minute by the way? For time, although against thy will, will draw thee along with it. The way of this life is not voluntary like that of travellers, but necessary like that of condemned persons, from the prison to the place of execution. To death thou standest condemned, whither thou art now going; how canst thou laugh? A malefactor, after sentence is past, is so surprised with the apprehension of death, that he thinks of nothing but dying. We are all condemned to die; how come we, then, to rejoice in those things which we are to leave so suddenly? Who, being led to the gallows, could please himself in some little flower that was given him by the way, or play with the halter which was shortly to strangle him? Since, then, all of us, even from the instant we are born, walk condemned to death, and know not whether we pass from thence into hell (at least we may), how come we to please ourselves with a flower, or, to say better, with the hay of some short gust of our appetites; since, according to the prophet, all the glory of the flesh is no more than a little hay, which quickly withers? How come we to delight in riches, which oftentimes hasten our deaths? why consider we not this, when we are certain that all we do in this life is vanity, except our preparation for death? In death, when there is no time nor remedy left us, we shall too late perceive this truth; then, all the goods of this life shall leave us by necessity, which we will not now leave with merit.

Death is a general privation of all temporal goods: a universal pillager of all things, which even despoils the body of the soul. For this, it is compared to a thief, who not only robs us of our treasure and substance, but bereaves us of our lives. Since, therefore, thou art to leave all, why dost thou load thyself in vain? What merchant, knowing that, so soon as he arrived at the port, his ship and goods should both be sunk, would charge his vessel with much merchandise? Arriving at death, thou, and all thou hast, are to sink and perish: why dost thou then burthen thyself with that which is not needful, but rather a hinderance to thy salvation? How many, forbearing to throw their goods overboard in some great tempest, have therefore, both themselves and goods, been swallowed by the raging sea? How many, out of a wicked love to these temporal riches, have lost themselves in the hour of death, and will not then leave their wealth when their wealth leaves them, but even at that time busy their thoughts more about it than their salvation? Wherefore St. Gregory says, "That is never lost without grief, which is possessed with love." Humbertus (Humbert. in tract. de Septem Timor.) writes of a certain man of great wealth, who, falling desperately sick, and even at the point of death, caused his treasure, and plate of gold

and silver to be brought before him ; and in this manner spoke to his soul : " My soul, all this I promise thee, and thou shalt enjoy it all, if thou wilt not now leave my body ; and greater things I will bestow upon thee, rich possessions and sumptuous houses, upon condition thou wilt yet stay with me." But finding his infirmity still to increase, and no hope left of life, in a great rage and fury he fell into these desperate speeches : " But since thou wilt not do what I desire thee, nor abide with me, I recommend thee to the devils ;" and immediately with these words miserably expired. In this story may be seen the vanity of temporal things, and the hurt he receives by them, who possesses them with too much affection. What greater vanity than not to profit us, in a passage of the greatest necessity and importance ? and what greater hurt than, when they cannot avail our bodies, to prejudice our souls ? That they put an impediment to our salvation, when our affections are too much set upon them, were a sufficient motive, not only to condemn them, but also to detest them. Robertus de Licio writes, that whilst he advised a sick person to make his confession, and take care of his soul, his servants and other domestics went up and down the house, laying hold every one of what they could ; the sick man, taking notice of it, and attending more to what they stole from him, than to what he spoke to him about the salvation of his soul, made deep sighs, and cried out, saying, " Wo be to me ! wo be to me ! who have taken so much pains to gather riches, and now am compelled to leave them, and they snatch them from me violently before my eyes. O my riches ! O my money ! O my jewels ! into whose possession are you to fall ?" and in these cries he gave up the ghost, making no more account of his soul, than if he had been a Turk. Vincentius Belovacensis (Vincen. in spec. moral.) relates also of one who, having lent four pounds of money, upon condition that, at four years' end, they should pay him twelve, he being in the state of death, a priest went to him and exhorted him to confess his sins, but could get no other words from the sick person than these : " Such a one is to pay me twelve pounds for four ;" and having said this, died immediately. Much to this purpose is a story related by St. Bernardin of a certain confessor, who earnestly persuading a rich man at the time of his death to a confession, could get no other words from him but " How sells wool ? What price bears it at present ?" and as the priest spoke to him, " Sir, for God's sake, leave off this discourse, and take care of your soul ;" the sick man still persevered, to inform himself of such things he might hope to gain by, asking him, " Father, when will the ships come ? are they yet arrived ?" for his thoughts were so wholly taken up with matters of gain and this world, that he could neither speak nor think of any thing, but what tended to his profit. But the priest still urging him to look to his soul and confess, all he could

get from him was, "I cannot;" and in this manner he died without confession.

This is the salary which the goods of the earth bestow on those who serve them, that if they do not leave or ruin them before their death, they are then certain at least to leave them, and often hazard the salvation of those that love them. O foolish sons of Adam! this short life is bestowed upon us for gaining the goods of heaven, which are to last eternally, and we spend it in seeking those of the earth, which are to perish instantly. Wherefore do we not employ this short time for the purchasing eternal glory, since we are to pass no more hereafter, than what we provide for here? Wherefore do we not consider this? Wherefore busy we ourselves about temporal things, and the affairs of this life, which we are instantly to leave, and enter into a region of eternity? Less are a thousand years in respect of eternity, than a quarter of an hour in respect of threescore years. Why are we then negligent in that short time we are to live, in acquiring that which is to endure for a world of worlds? Death is a moment placed between this life and the next, in which we are to traffic for eternity. Let us not, therefore, be careless; but let us remember how much it imports us to die well, and to that end let us endeavor to live well.

SECTION III.

Besides all this, although one should die the most happy death that can be imagined, yet it suffices to behold the dead body, when the soul has left it, how ugly and noisome the miserable carcass remains, that even friends flee from it, and scarce dare stay one night alone with it. The nearest and most obliged kindred procure it in all haste to be carried out of doors, and having wrapped it in some coarse sheet, throw it into the grave, and within two days forget it: and he who in life could be contained in great and sumptuous palaces, is now content with a narrow lodging of seven feet of earth: he who used to rest in rich and dainty beds, has for his couch the hard ground, and, as *Isaiah* says, for his mattress moths, and for his covering worms, his pillows, at best, the bones of other dead persons; then heaping upon him a little earth, and perhaps a grave-stone, they leave his flesh to be feasted on by the worms, whilst his heirs triumph in his riches. He who gloried in the exercise of arms, and was used to revel at balls and feasts, is now stiff and cold, his hands and feet without motion, and all his senses without life. He who with his power and pride trampled upon all, is now trod under foot by all. Consider him eight days dead, drawn forth from his grave, how ghastly and horrible a spectacle he will appear; and wherein differ from a dead dog thrown upon a dunghill? Behold, then, what thou pamest; a body which shall, perhaps, within four days, be eaten by

some loathsome vermin. Whereupon dost thou found thy vain pretensions, which are but castles in the air, founded upon a little earth, which turning into dust, the whole fabric falls to the ground? See wherein all human greatness concludes; and that the end of man is no less loathsome and miserable, than his beginning. Let this consideration serve thee, as it has done many servants of Christ, to despise all things of this life. Alexander Faya (Alexan. Faya, to. 2. Joh. Major, verbo Mors. Ex. 21.) writes, that having opened the vault, wherein lay interred the body of a principal count, they who were present perceived upon the face of the dead person, a toad of an extraordinary greatness, which, accompanied with many other filthy and loathsome vermin, was feeding upon his flesh; which caused so great a horror and amazement, that they all fled: which, so soon as it came to the knowledge of the son of that count, who was then in the flower of his age, he would needs go and behold the spectacle; and looking seriously upon it, he broke into these speeches: "These are the friends which we breed and provide for with our delicacies; for these we rest upon soft beds, and lodge in gilt chambers, adorned with tapestries, and make them grow and increase with the vanity of our dainties. Were it not better to prevent them by fasts, and penances, and austerities in our life, that they may not thus insult upon us after death?" With this consideration quitting his fair possessions, and flying privately away, accompanied only with a lively desire of being poor for Christ, which he accounted for the greatest riches, he came to Rome, where, chastising his body with much rigor, and living in the holy fear of the Lord, he at last became a collier, and by his labor sustained his poor life. Finally, coming one day to the city to sell his coals, he fell into a grievous sickness, which having endured with marvellous patience, he at last delivered his most happy soul into the hands of his Redeemer; and at the very instant of his death, all the bells of the city rung themselves; with which miracle, the pope and the Roman court being marvellously astonished, his confessor related to them all that happened, and informed them both of the condition and sanctity of the dead person; and there being at the same time in Rome some gentlemen and soldiers belonging to the same prince, who came in search of their master, and finding him deceased, they carried home his holy body, with much joy and reverence, to his country.

The sight of the dead body of the empress Donna Isabella, wife to the emperor Charles V., wrought no less effect in the heart of the blessed Francis de Borgia, then marquis of Lombay, who being appointed to wait upon the corpse to Granada, where it was to be interred, and being to deliver it with the face bare, according to custom, to the end it might appear to be the same body, he caused the sheet of lead, wherein it was wrapped, to be opened,

which immediately cast forth so horrible a stench, that those who were present, not able to endure it, were forced to retire; and withal the face appeared so foul and deformed, that not any of the attendants durst take their oath, that that was the empress's body. Who sees not here the vanity of the world? What is of more respect and esteem, than the bodies of great kings and princes whilst they live, and now dead, the guards and gentlemen who are to wait upon them flee from them? Who are counted more happy than they, who have the fortune to be near their persons? They are spoken to upon the knee, as if they were gods; but being dead, all forsake them, and even toads, worms and dogs dare approach and eat them. A good testimony of this was queen Jezabel, whose pampered body, adored whilst she lived, was, being dead, ignominiously torn in pieces by dogs. But to return to our story; the marquis, remaining alone behind the rest, began to consider what the empress once was, and what he now beheld her. Where was the beauty of that face, now become worms and putrefaction; where that majesty and gravity of countenance, which made all reverence her, and those people happy who beheld her, but now grown so hideous, that her most obliged servants leave and abandon her? Where is now the royal sceptre, but resolved into filth and corruption? This consideration so changed his heart, that, despising what was temporal, and now wholly seeking what was eternal, he determined never after to serve that lord who was mortal.

The very memory of the loathsomeness of a dead body may serve to make us despise the beauty of that which is living, as St. Peter Damian (*Petrus Damianus* in *Gomor. c. 23.*) advises us, saying, "If the subtle enemy shall set before thee the frail beauty of the flesh, send thy thoughts presently to the sepulchre of the dead; and let them there see what they can find agreeable to the touch, or pleasing to the sight. Consider that poison which now stinks intolerably, that corruption which engenders and feeds worms. That dust and dry ashes was once soft and lively flesh, and in its youth was subject to the like passions as thou art. Consider those rigid nerves, those naked teeth, the disjointed disposition of the bones and arteries, and that horrible dissipation of the whole body; and by this means, the monster of this deformed and confused figure will pluck from thy heart all deceits and illusions." This from St. Peter Damian.

All this is certainly to happen to thyself. Wherefore dost thou not amend thy evil condition? This is to be thy end; upon this, therefore, direct thy life and actions. From hence spring all the errors of men, that they forget the end of their lives, which they ought to have still before their eyes, and by it to order themselves for the complying with their obligations. With reason had the *Brachmans* their sepulchres placed still open before their doors,

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that by the memory of death they might learn to live. In this sense is that axiom of Plato most true, when he says, that wisdom is the meditation of death; because, this wholesome thought of death undeceives us in the vanities of the world, and gives us force and vigor to amend our lives. Some authors write of a certain confessor (Johannes Brom. in Sum. verb. Pœnit. num. 12.), who, when all his persuasions could not prevail with his penitent to do penance for his sins, contented himself with this promise, that he would suffer one of his servants every night, when he went to bed, to sound these words in his ear, *Think that thou art to die*; who having often heard this admonition, and profoundly considered it with himself, he at last returned to his confessor, well disposed to admit of such penance as should be enjoined him. The same thing happened to another, who, having confessed to the pope very heinous crimes, said, that he could not fast, nor wear hair-shirts, nor admit of any other kinds of austerity. His holiness, having communicated the matter to God, gave him a ring with this motto: *Memento mori*; *Remember thou art to die*: charging him, that as often as he looked on the ring, he should read those words, and call death to mind. In a few hours after, the memory hereof caused such a change in his heart, that he offered to fulfil whatever penance his holiness should please to inflict upon him. For this reason, it seems, God commanded the prophet Jeremy, that he should go into the house of the potter, and that he should there hear his words. Well might the Lord have sent his prophet into some place more decent, to receive his sacred words, than where so many men were daily employed in dirt and clay; but here was the particular mystery, whereby we are given to understand, that the presence of sepulchres, wherein is preserved, as in the house of a potter, the clay of human nature, was a place most proper for God to speak to us, that the memory of death might more deeply imprint his words in our hearts. For this very reason, the devil strives, with all his power and cunning, to obstruct us in the memory of death. For what other cause can be assigned, why the mere suspicion of some loss or notable damage should bereave us of sleep, and that the certainty of death, which of things terrible is most terrible, should never trouble us?

CHAPTER II.

Remarkable Conditions of the End of Temporal Life.

THE misery wherein all the felicity of this world is to terminate the end of our life, has other most remarkable conditions, very worthy to be considered, and by which we may perceive the

goods of it to be most contemptible. We will now speak principally of three : First, that death is most infallible, certain, and no way to be avoided. The second, that the time is most uncertain, because we know neither when nor how it will happen. The third, that it is but only one, and but once to be experienced, so that we cannot, by a second death, correct the errors of the first. Concerning the certainty and infallibility of death, it imports us much to persuade ourselves of it ; for as it is infallible, that the other life shall be without end, so it is as certain that this shall have it ; and as the damned despair to find an end in their torments, so are we practically to despair, that the pleasures and contents of this world are to endure for ever. God has not made a law more inviolable than that of death. For, having often dispensed in other laws, and by his omnipotent power and pleasure violated, as I may say, divers times the rights of nature, he neither has nor will dispense with the law of death, but has rather dispensed with other laws that this should stand in force ; and, therefore, has not only executed the sentence of death upon those who in rigor ought to die, but upon those to whom it was in no wise due. In the conception of Christ our Saviour, those established laws of nature, that men were not to be born, but by propagation from men, and breach of the mother's integrity, were dispensed with. God, that his laws should have no force in Christ, working two most stupendous miracles, and infringing the laws of nature, that his Son might be born of a Virgin Mother, was so far from exempting him from the law of death, that death not belonging to him, as being Lord of the law, and wanting all sin, even original, by which was contracted death, nay immortality, and the four gifts of glory being due to his most holy body, as resulting from the clear vision of the divine essence, which his soul ever enjoyed, yet all this notwithstanding, God would not comply with this right of nature, but rather miraculously suspended, by his omnipotent arm, those gifts of glory from his body, that he might become subject to death ; insomuch as God observes this law of death with such rigor, that doing miracles, that the law of nature should not be kept in other things, he works miracles, that the law of death should be observed even by his own Son, who deserved it not, and to whom it was in no sort due. And now that the Son of God has taken upon him the redemption of mankind, for whom, out of his infinite charity, it was convenient for him to die the death of the cross, which reason failing in his most holy Mother, to whom death was not likewise due from original sin, she being privileged, according to the opinion of most universities, as well in that as many other things, by her blessed Son, yet would he not exempt her from that inviolable law of death. What enchantment then is this, that death being so certain, we will not suffer ourselves to understand it, nor be

persuaded that it is so? Thou art to die; assure thyself of that. An irrevocable law is this, and without remedy: thou must die. The time will come when those eyes, with which thou readest this, shall be burst and lose their sight: those hands, which thou now employest, be without sense or motion; that body, which thou movest from place to place with such agility, shall be stiff and cold; this mouth, which now discourses, shall be mute without breath or spirit; and this flesh, which thou now pamperest, shall be consumed and eaten by loathsome worms and vermin. An infallible thing it is, that the time will come, when thou shalt be covered with earth, thy body rot, and appear more noisome, and horrible to the senses, than a dead dog putrefied upon a dung-hill. The time will come when thou shalt be forgotten, as if thou hadst never been, and those that pass shall walk over thee, without remembering that such a man was born. Consider this, and persuade thyself that thou must die as well as others; that which has happened to so many, must happen also to thee; thou who art now afraid of the dead, must die thyself; thou who loathest to behold an open sepulchre, where lie the half putrefied bones and flesh of others, must putrefy and rot thyself. Think upon this seriously, and reflect with thyself soberly, how thou shalt look when thou art dead; and this consideration will give thee a great knowledge what thy life is, and make thee despise the pleasures of it.

Truly such is the condition of death, that although to die were only contingent, and nowise certain, yet, because it might happen, it ought to make us very careful and solicitous. If God had at first created the world replenished with people, and some one, before it was known what death was, had fallen sick of a pestilential fever, and should have suffered, in the sight of the rest, the accidents of that infirmity; those violent fits of heat, that burning thirst, that restless uneasiness of mind and body, tossing and tumbling from side to side, that raging frenzy which bereaves him of his judgment; and at last they should behold him pale and wan, wholly disfigured, struggling with death, and giving the last gasp; the body afterwards to remain stiff, cold and immovable; how astonished would they be at the sight of that misery! which would appear much greater, when, after three or four days, the body began to smell and corrupt, to be full of worms and filth. Without doubt, a mortal sadness would seize upon them all, and every one would fear, lest some such miserable condition might happen to himself. And although God should say, "I will not that all shall die; I will content myself with the death of some few;" but should leave those uncertain; this would suffice to make all tremble; each one would fear, lest he were one of those designed for that misfortune. If then in this case, death being uncertain, all would quake, because all might die; why remain

we so supinely careless, since it is sure all must die? If death, being doubtful, causes such a terror, why do we not fear it, being certain? Nay, though God should further say, that only one of all those in the world should die, but did not declare who that one was, yet all would fear. Why then dost thou not now fear, when all men must infallibly die, and perhaps thou the first? But if God should proceed yet further to reveal that one appointed to die, and he should, notwithstanding, live in that loose and careless manner as thou now dost, how would the rest of the world admire his negligence and vain temerity! what would they say? Certainly they would cry out to him, Man, thou that art to turn into dust, why livest thou in that loose manner? Man, that art to be eaten by worms, why dost thou pamper thyself? Man, who art to appear before the tribunal of God, why dost thou not think upon the account that shall be demanded from thee? Man, who art to end, and all things with thee, why dost thou make such esteem of vanity? We who are to live for ever, well may we build houses and provide riches, because we look for no other life than this, which is never to end; but thou who art in this life but as a passenger, and art to leave it to-morrow, what hast thou to do to build houses; what hast thou to do with the cares and business of this world? Wherefore dost thou take thought for those temporal things, whereof thou hast no need? Care for those of the other life, wherein thou art to remain for ever. Thou, thou art he whom God has designed to die; why dost thou not believe it? or, if thou dost, why dost thou laugh? why dost thou rejoice? why dost thou live so much at ease in a place where thou art a pilgrim, and not to rest? Leave off the thoughts of the earth, and consider where thou art to go. It is not fit for thee to live here in mirth and jollity, but to retire into some solitary wilderness, and there dispose thyself for that terrible trance which awaits thee.

Let every man, therefore, say within himself, "It is I who am to die, and resolve into dust; I have nothing to do with this world; the other was made for me, and I am only to care for that: in this I am only a passenger, and am therefore to look upon the eternal, whither I am going, and am there to make my abode for ever. Certain it is, that death will come and hurry me along with him. All the business, therefore, I have now, is to dispose myself for so hard an encounter; and since it is not in the power of man to free me from it, I will only serve that Lord who is able to save me in so certain and imminent a danger." Much to this purpose, for our undeceiving, is that story set forth by John Major (Johan. Major, et Alex. Faya. tom. 2.): "A certain soldier had served a marquis for many years with great fidelity, for which he was favored by his lord with a singular respect and affection. The soldier chanced to fall into his last infirmity, which

no sooner came to the knowledge of the marquis, but he came to visit him, accompanied with divers expert physicians; and having inquired of his health, and spoken many things to him of much comfort and kindness, offered himself to assist him in all things which might conduce to his health or content, and wished him boldly to demand what might be useful or available for him, assuring him it should be granted without spare of cost or trouble. The sick soldier, after much importunity, at last entreated the favor of three things: either that he would afford him some means to escape from death, which he perceived was now ready to seize upon him; or that he would mitigate those great pains which he then suffered, but for the space of one short hour; or that, after he was departed this life, he would procure him a good lodging, though but for one night, and no longer. The marquis answered, that those were only in the power of God, and wished him to demand things feasible here upon earth, and he would not fail to serve him. To whom the sick soldier replied, "I now too late perceive all my labor and travail to be lost, and all the services which I have done you, in the whole course of my life, to be vain and fruitless; and turning himself to those who were present, spoke to them with much feeling and tears in his eyes: 'My brethren, behold how vainly I have spent my time, being so precious a jewel, in the serving of this master, obeying his commands with much care and great danger of my soul, which at this instant is the grief I am most sensible of! See how small is his power, since, in all these pains which afflict me, he is not able to give me ease for one hour's space. Wherefore, I admonish you that you open your eyes in time, and let my error be a warning to you, that you preserve yourselves from so notable a danger, and that you endeavor in this world to serve such a Lord, as may not only free you from these present perplexities, and preserve you from future evils, but may be able to crown you with glory in another life. And if the Lord, by the intercession of your prayers, shall be pleased to restore my health, I promise hereafter not to employ myself in the service of so poor and impotent a master, who is not able to reward me; but my whole endeavor shall be to serve him, who has power to protect me and the whole world, by his divine virtue.'" With this great repentance he died, leaving us an example to benefit ourselves, by that time which God bestows upon us here, for the obtaining of eternal reward.

SECTION II.

Let us now come to the second condition, which is the uncertainty of time in the circumstances. For as it is most certain, that we are to die, so it is most uncertain, how we are to die; and as there is nothing more known, than that death is to seize

upon all, so there is nothing less understood, than when, and in what manner. Who knows whether he is to die in his old age, or in his youth? if by sickness, or struck by a thunderbolt? if by grief, or stabbed by poniards? if suddenly, or slowly? if in a city, or in a wilderness? if a year hence, or to-day? The doors of death are ever open, and the enemy continually lies in ambush, and when we least think of him, will assault us. How can a man be careless to provide for a danger which ever threatens him? Let us see with what art men keep their temporal things, even at such time as they run no hazard. The shepherds guard their flocks with watchful dogs, although they believe the wolf to be far off, only because he may come; and walled towers are kept by garrisons in time of peace, because an enemy either does or may approach them. But when are we secure from death? when can we say, that now it will not come? why do we not then provide ourselves against so apparent a danger? In frontier towns, sentinels watch day and night, although no enemy appears, nor any assault is feared; why do we not always watch, since we are never secure from the assaults of death? He who suspected that thieves were to enter his house, would watch all night, because they should at no hour find him unprovided. It being, then, not a suspicion, but an evident certainty, that death will come, and we know not when, why do we not always watch? We are in a continual danger, and, therefore, ought to be continually prepared. It is good ever to have our accounts made with God, since we know not but he may call us in such haste, that we shall have no time to perfect them. It is good to play sure game, and be ever in the grace of God. Who would not tremble to hang over a vast precipice, whence, if he fell, he were certain to be dashed in a thousand pieces, and that by so weak a support as a thread? This, or, in truth, much greater, is the danger of him who is in mortal sin, who hangs over hell by the thread of life, a twist so delicate, that not a knife, but the wind and the least fit of sickness break it. Wonderful is the danger wherein he stands who continues for the shortest space in mortal sin. Death has time enough to shoot his arrow in the speaking of a word; the twinkling of an eye suffices. Who can laugh and be pleased, whilst he stands naked and disarmed in the midst of his enemies? Amongst as many enemies is man, as there are ways to death, which are innumerable. The bursting of a vein, the breaking of an imposthume, a vapor that flies up the head, a passion that oppresses the heart, a tile that falls from a house, a piercing air that enters by some narrow crevice; a hundred thousand other occasions open the doors to death, and are his ministers. It is not then safe for man to be disarmed, and naked of the grace of God, in the midst of so many adversaries and dangers of death which hourly threaten him. We issue from the wombs of our

mothers as condemned persons out of prison, and walk towards execution, for the guilt which we have contracted by original sin. Who, being led to execution, would entertain himself by the way with vain conceits and frivolous jests? We are all condemned persons who go to execution, though by different ways, which we ourselves know not: some the straight way, and some by by-paths, but are all sure to meet in death. Who knows whether he goes the direct way, or winds about by turns? whether he shall arrive there soon or stay later? All that we know, is, that we are upon the way, and are not far from thence. We ought therefore still to be prepared, and free from the distracting pleasures of this life, for fear we fall suddenly and unawares upon it. This danger of sudden death is sufficient to make us distaste all the delights of the earth. Dionysius, king of Sicily, that he might undeceive a young philosopher, who therefore held him to enjoy the chief felicity, because he wanted nothing of his pleasure, caused him one day to be placed at a royal table, and served with every variety of splendid entertainments; but over the place where he was seated, caused secretly a sharp-pointed sword to be hung directly over his head, suspended only by a horse's hair. This danger was sufficient to make the poor philosopher forbear his dinner, and not relish one morsel of the feast with pleasure. Thou, then, who art no more secure of thy life than he, how canst thou delight in the pleasures of the world? He, who every moment expects death, ought no moment to delight in life. This only consideration of death, according to Ricardus, were sufficient to make us distaste all the pleasures of the earth. A great danger or fear suffices to take away the sense of lesser joys; and what greater danger than that of eternity?

Death is therefore uncertain, that thou shouldst be ever certain to despise this life, and dispose thyself for the other. Thou art every hour in danger of death, to the end that thou shouldst be every hour prepared to leave life. What is death, but the way to eternity? A great journey thou hast to make; wherefore dost thou not provide in time; and the rather, because thou knowest not how soon thou mayst be forced to depart? The people of God, because they knew not when they were to march, were for forty years, which they remained in the wilderness, ever in readiness. Be thou then ever in readiness, since thou mayst perhaps depart to-day. Consider there is much to do in dying; prepare thyself whilst thou hast time, and do it well. For this many years were necessary; wherefore, since thou knowest not whether thou shalt have one day allowed thee, why dost thou not this day begin to dispose thyself? If, when thou makest a short journey, and hast furnished and provided thyself with all things fitting, yet thou commonly findest something to be forgotten, how comes it to pass, that for so long a journey, as is the region of eternity,

thou thinkest thyself sufficiently provided, when thou hast scarce begun to think of it? Who is there who does not desire to have served God faithfully two years, before death should take him? If, then, thou art not secure of one, why dost thou not begin? Trust not in thy health or youth, for death steals treacherously upon us, when we least look for it; for, according to the saying of Christ, our Redeemer, it will come in an hour when it is not thought on. And the apostle said, the day of the Lord would come like a thief in the night, when none were aware of it, and when the master of the house was in a profound sleep. Promise not thyself to-morrow, for thou knowest not whether death will come to-night. The day before the children of Israel went forth from Egypt, how many of that kingdom, young lords, and princes of families, promised themselves to do great matters the next day, or perhaps within a year after! yet none of them lived to see the morning. Wisely did Messodamus, who, as Guido Bituricensis writes, when one invited him forth the next day to dinner, answered, "My friend, why dost thou summon me for to-morrow, since it is many years that I durst not promise any thing for the day following? Every hour I look for death; there is no trust to be given to strength of body, youthful years, much riches, or human hopes." Hear what God says to the prophet Amos (ch. viii.): "In that day the sun shall set at mid-day, and I will overcast the earth with darkness in the day of light." What is the setting of the sun at mid-day, but when men think they are in the midst of their life, in the flower of their age, when they hope to live many years to possess great wealth, to marry rich wives, to shine in the world? then death comes and overshadows the brightness of their day, with a cloud of sorrow; as it happened in the story related by Alexander Faya (Alexan. Faya, tom. 2.): Ladislaus, king of Hungary and Bohemia, sent a most solemn embassy to Charles, king of France, for the conducting home of that king's daughter, who was espoused to the prince, his son. The chief ambassador elected for this journey was Udabricas, bishop of Passaw, for whose attendants were selected two hundred principal men of Hungary, two hundred of Bohemia, and two hundred more of Austria, all persons of eminent birth and nobility, so richly clad, and in so elegant an equipage, that they appeared as so many princes. To these the bishop added a hundred gentlemen, chosen out of his own subjects; so that there passed through France seven hundred gentlemen in company, most richly accoutred; and for the greater pomp and magnificence of the embassy, there went along with them four hundred beautiful ladies in sumptuous habits, and adorned with most costly jewels; the coaches which carried them were studded with gold, and encased with stones of value. Besides all this were many gifts, and rich garments of inestimable price, which they brought along

with them for presents. But the very day that this glorious embassy entered Paris, before they came to the place appointed for their entertainment, a courier arrived with the news of the death of the espoused prince. Such was the grief that struck the heart of the French king at so unexpected news, that he could neither give an answer to the embassy, nor speak with the ambassador, or those who accompanied him; and they departed most sorrowful from Paris, every one returning to his own home. In this manner, God knows, by means of death, to fill the earth with darkness and sorrow, in the day of greatest brightness, as he spoke by his prophet.

Since, then, thou knowest not when thou art to die, think thou must die to-day, and be ever prepared for that which may ever happen. Trust in the mercies of God, and employ them incessantly, but presume not to defer thy conversion for a moment. For who knows, whether thou shalt ever, henceforward, have time to invoke him, and having invoked him, whether thou shalt deserve to be heard? Know, that the mercy of God is not promised to those who, therefore, trust in him, that they may sin with hope of pardon, but to those who, fearing his divine justice, cease to offend him. Wherefore, St. Gregory says (Greg. in Moral.), "The mercies of Almighty God forget him, who forgets his justice; nor shall he find him merciful, who does not fear him just." For this it is so often repeated in Scripture, that "the mercy of God is for those who fear him." And in one part it is said, "The mercy of the Lord, from eternity to eternity, is upon those who fear him." And in another, "As the father hath mercy on his son, so the Lord hath mercy on those who fear him." In another, "According to the height from earth to heaven, he has corroborated his mercy upon those that fear him." Finally, the very Mother of Mercy says in her divine canticle, "The mercy of the Lord is from generation to generation, upon those who fear him." Thou seest, then, that the divine mercy is not promised to all; and that thou shalt remain excluded from it whilst thou presumest, and dost not fear his justice. And where, I beseech thee, is the fear of his justice, when, knowing that thou mayst die to-day, thou deferrest thy conversion for so many years, so as thy vices may be rather said to leave thee, than thou them? Mark what St. Augustine says: "Repentance in death is very dangerous; for in the Holy Scripture there is but one only found, to wit, the good thief, who had true repentance in his end. There is one found, that none should despair, and but one, that none should presume. For in a sound man, repentance is sound, in an infirm man infirm, and in a dead man dead." Many deal with God, as king Dionysius did with the statue of Apollo, from which when he took his cloak of massy gold, he said, "This cloak is neither fit for summer nor winter; for sum-

mer it is too heavy, for winter too cold :” so some can find no time for the service of God Almighty. In youth they say, it is too early, and that we ought to allow that age its time of freedom and pleasure ; that when they are old, they will seriously think of virtue, and amendment of life ; that the vigor of youth is not to be enfeebled with the austerities of penance, which render us infirm and useless the rest of our succeeding lives ; but, arriving at old age, if by chance they attain it, they have then many excuses, and pretend that they want health and strength to perform their penances. After this manner they would deceive God Almighty ; but they remain deceived themselves. To the apostle St. James this manner of speech seemed not well : “ To-morrow we will go to such a city, and there we will stay a year ;” because we know not what shall be to-morrow. If, then, in temporal things it be not good to say, I will do this to-morrow, what shall it be in procuring the salvation of our souls, to say, Ten or twenty years hence, when I am old (which who knows whether it ever shall be), I will then serve God and repent ? To what purpose defer we that until to-morrow, which imports so much to be done to-day ; especially since it absolutely imports, and perhaps will not be to-morrow, if not to-day ? In this error was St. Augustine (Aug. Confes.), as he himself confesses : “ I felt myself (says he) detained, and I often repeated these words : ‘ Miserable man, until when ? until when ? To-morrow, and to-morrow. And why is there not to-day an end of my wicked life ? ’ This I said, and wept with most bitter contrition of my heart.”

SECTION III.

To this uncertainty of death is to be added the third condition of being only one, and only once to be tried ; so as the error of dying ill cannot be amended by dying well another time. God gave to man his senses, and other parts of his body, doubled ; he gave him two eyes, that, if one failed, he might avail himself of the other ; he gave him two ears, that, if one grew deaf, he might supply the defect by the other ; he gave him two hands, that, if one were lost, yet he might not wholly be disabled ; but of deaths he gave but one, and if that one miscarry, all is ruined. A terrible cause, that the thing which most imports us, which is to die, has no trial, experience or remedy ; it is but only once to be acted, and that in an instant, and upon that instant all eternity depends, in which, if we fail, the error is never to be amended. Plutarch writes of Lamachus, the centurion, that, reprehending a soldier for some error committed in war, the soldier promised him he would do so no more ; to whom the discreet centurion replied : “ Thou sayest well ; for in war the mischief which follows the first error is so great, that thou canst not err twice.” And if in

war you cannot err twice, in death you ought not to err once, the error being wholly irreparable. If an ignorant peasant, who had never drawn a bow, should be commanded to shoot at a mark far distant, upon condition, that if he hit it, he would be highly rewarded with many noble and rich gifts, but if he missed it, and that at the first shot, he should be burned alive; in what straits would this poor man find himself? how perplexed, that he should be forced upon a thing of that difficulty, wherein he had no skill, and that the failing should cost him so dear as his life; but especially, that it was only once to be essayed, without the possibility of repairing the first fault by a second trial? This is our case. I know not how we are so jocund; we have never died; we have no experience or skill in a thing of so great difficulty; we are only once to die, and in that, all is at stake, either eternity of torments in hell, or of happiness in heaven: how live we then so careless and forgetful of dying well, since for it we were born and are but once to try it? This action is the most important of all our life, which is to pass in the presence of God and angels; upon it depends all eternity, and, if missed, is without repair or amendment. Those human actions which may be repeated, if one miss, the other may hit, and that which is lost in one may be regained in another. If a rich merchant has this year a ship sunk in the ocean, another may arrive the next, laden with such riches as may recompense the loss of the former. And if a great orator miscarry in his declamation, and lose his credit, he may with another recover it; but if we once fail in death, the loss is never to be restored. That which is but only one, is worthy of more care and esteem, because the loss of it is irreparable. Let us then value the time of this life, since there is no other given us, wherein to gain eternity; let us esteem that time, wherein we may practise a precious death, or, to say better, both a precious life and death; learning in life how to die. It was well said by a pious doctor, If those who are to execute some office, or perform some matter of importance, or if it be but of pleasure, as to dance or play at tennis, yet study first before they come to do it; why should we not then study the art of dying, which to do well, is an action more difficult and important than all others? If a man were obliged to leap some great and desperate leap, upon condition, that if he performed it well, he should be made master of a wealthy kingdom, but if ill, he should be chained to an oar, and made a perpetual galley-slave; without all doubt, this man would use much diligence in preparing himself for so hazardous an undertaking, and would often practise before, an action of so great consequence, from which he expected so different fortunes. How far more different are those which we expect from so great a leap, as is that from life to death, since the kingdoms of the earth, compared with that of heaven, are

trash and rubbish, and the tugging of an oar at the oar compared with hell, a glory? When the leap is great and the distance is far, he who is to leap it, uses to fetch his career backwards, that he may leap farther, and with greater force. We, therefore, knowing the danger of the leap from life to death, that we may perform it better, we ought to fetch our career far back, even from the beginning of our short life, and from our first use of reason, from which we shall know, that the life we live is mortal, that at the end of it we have a great debt to pay, and that we are to discharge both use and principal when we least think of it. St. John Eleemosynarius relates, that anciently, when they crowned an emperor, the principal architects presented him with some pieces of several sorts of marble, wishing him to make choice of such as best pleased him for his sepulchre; giving him thereby to understand, that his reign was to last so short a time, that it was convenient for him immediately to begin his tomb, that it might be finished before his life were ended; and that withal he could not govern well his vassals, unless he first governed himself by the memory of death. The others present were also admonished by this mystery, that so soon as reason began to command and have dominion in us, it was then time to provide for death, and that in the preparation for our end consisted the good government and perfection of life. "A perfect life (says St. Gregory, Greg. Moral. 12.) is the meditation of death;" and he enjoys a perfect life, who employs it in the study of death; he lives well, who learns how to die well; and he that knows not that, knows nothing; all other sciences profit him but little. What did all that he had studied, and all that he knew, profit the great Aristotle? Nothing; which he himself confessed, being near his death. For when his disciples besought him, that having in his lifetime bestowed upon them so many fair lessons and wise sentences, he would leave them one at his death, this was his answer: "I entered this life in poverty, I lived in misery, and die in ignorance of that which it most imports me to know." He said well, for he had never studied how to die. Many disciples has Aristotle in those sciences which he knew, and many who follow his opinions, but many more who imitate him in the ignorance he had of death.

Let us husband time, in which we may gain eternity; which being once lost, we shall lose both the time of this life and the eternity of the other. How many millions are now in hell, who, whilst they were in this world, despised time, and would not be content to suffer thousands of years, all the torments of the damned, for the redemption but of one instant, in which they might by repentance recover the eternal life of glory, which is now lost without remedy? and yet thou castest away not only instants, but hours, days and years. Consider what a damned

soul would give for some part of that time, which thou lovest; and take heed that thou hereafter, when there shall be no repair of that time which thou now so lavishly misspendest, be not thyself in the same grief and bitterness. O fools, as many as seek vain entertainments to pass away the time, as though time would stand still, if they found not divertisements to make it pass. The time of this life flies and outruns thee, and thou layest not up for the other. Consider how thou mayst by time gain eternity; look not then upon the loss of it, as upon the loss of time, but of eternity; for, in an instant of time, thou mayst gain infinite instants of what you are to enjoy for ever. How small a purchase for eternity is our time in this life, which passes with more swiftness than the wind! Consider with what speed death pursues you; it loses not a moment, for whilst thou sleepest, it is in full career; yet thou darest idle away the time. Thou sleepest, says St. Ambrose, (Ambr. in Psal. 1. Tu dormis, et tempus ambulat) and time walks on; be not then a minute idle, seeing thou mayst, even in that short space, purchase heaven for ever. Time, as says Nazianzen, is the market or fair of eternity. Endeavor then, whilst it lasts, to get a good bargain; for this life once past, there is no more occasion of traffic; the time appointed for storing up is but short, and the gain and profit is eternal. Hear what a heathen teaches thee, who knew not this great good, that by time might be purchased eternity, and yet he says in this manner (Seneca, Epist. 118.): "Nature did not bestow time upon us with such liberality, as that the least particle of it might be cast away. Consider how much time is lost, even to the most diligent; some part the care of our health takes from us, some that of our friends, some our necessary occasions; some our public affairs employ, sleep divides life with us. Of this, then, so short and rapid time which remains, what doth it profit us to spend the greater part in vain?" The same author advises us also (Lib. de brevitate vitæ), that we strive to overcome the swiftness of time, with our diligence in well using and employing it. If this be Seneca's counsel, who had not the help of faith, and was ignorant, that in an instant of time might be gained an eternity of glory, what ought we to do, who have the light of heaven, the knowledge of eternal happiness, and the threats of eternal torments? Let us live ever dying, and let us think every instant to be our last; so shall we not lose this time which is so precious, and by which we may gain what is eternal. Let us call to mind what is said by St. John Climacus (Climac. grad. 6.): "The present day is not well past, unless we esteem it to be the last of our life. He is a good man, who every hour expects death; but he is a saint, that every hour desires it."

At least, let us behave ourselves as mortals, and let us believe we are so, showing by our works that we know we are to die.

Let us ask that of God, which was prayed for by David : " Lord, let me know the fewness of my days." It is apparent that we are to die ; it is apparent that we know not when ; it is apparent that we are to die but once ; but it is much more available, as St. Ambrose notes, when God says it, and we discover it in ourselves. Let us therefore practically persuade ourselves of this truth, and let not that time slip from between our hands, which, once past, will never return. Let us blush at the counsel of a heathen, Marcus Aurelius, the emperor, who advises us to proceed always constantly in virtuous actions (Anton. lib. 2. in princip.): " Reflect (says he) upon the end of that time which is assigned thee, which if thou wilt not spend in procuring the peace of thy mind whilst thou livest, it will pass away, and never return to thee being dead : every hour apply thy mind to mark seriously what thou takest in hand, and do it accurately with fortitude as becomes a Roman, with an unfeigned gravity, humanity, liberality and justice, and in the mean time withdraw thy mind from all other thoughts ; which thou shalt easily do, if thou shalt so perform each action without the mixture of vain glory, as if it were the last of thy life." This is an admirable counsel, that since thou knowest thou art to die, and knowest not when, that thou perform each action as if it were thy last, and as if in ending it, thou were to expire thyself. Above all, let us endeavor to leave sin and evil inclinations ; to leave the cares of the earth, and to elevate our whole hearts and affections to heaven, and there to place our thoughts, which are to be upright and settled in God Almighty. A crooked tree, when they cut it down, falls that way it was inclined when it grew. If one do not bend towards heaven, whilst he lives, which way can he fall in death ? It is much to be feared, into hell.

CHAPTER III.

Of that Moment which is the Medium between Time and Eternity, which, being the End of Life, is, therefore, most terrible.

WE ought then seriously to consider (which is certainly a matter of great amazement) all which is to pass in that moment of death, for which the time of this life was only bestowed upon us, and upon which depends the eternity of the other. O most dreadful point, which art the end of time and beginning of eternity ! O most fearful instant, which shuttest up the prefixed term of this life, and determinest the business of our salvation ! O moment, upon which depends eternity, how oughtest thou to be placed in our thoughts with profit, that we may not hereafter (when it is too late) remember thee with repentance ! How many things are to

pass in thee? In the same instant, life is to finish, all our works to be examined, and that sentence to be given, which is to be executed for all eternity. O last moment of life, O first of eternity, how terrible is the thought of thee, since in thee not only life is to be lost, but to be accounted for, and we then to enter into a region which we know not! In that moment I shall cease to live; in that moment I shall behold my Judge, who shall lay all my sins before me, with all their weight, number and enormity. In it I shall receive a strict charge of all the divine benefits bestowed upon me; and in it a judgment shall pass upon me, either for my salvation or damnation eternal. How wonderful is it, that for so many matters, and of so great importance, there is no more time allotted than the space of an instant, no place left for reply, intercession of friends or appeal. O fearful moment, upon which so much depends! O most important instant of time and eternity! Admirable is the high wisdom of God, which had placed a point in the midst between time and eternity, to which all the time of this life is to relate, and upon which the whole eternity of the other is to depend. O moment, which art neither time nor eternity, but art the horizon of both, and dividest things temporal from eternal! O narrow moment! O most dilated point, wherein so many things are to be concluded, so strict an account is to be given, and where so rigorous a sentence, as is to be pronounced, is ever to stand in force! A strange case, that a business of eternity is to be resolved in a moment, and no place allowed for the intercession of friends, or our own diligence. It will then be in vain to repair to the saints in heaven, or the priests upon earth; those will not intercede for thee, nor can these give thee absolution; because the rigor of the Judge, in that instant wherein thou expirest, allows no further mercy. St. John says (Apoc. xx.) that heaven and earth shall fly from the presence of the Judge. Whither wilt thou then go? to what place canst thou repair, being the person against whom the process is commenced? It is therefore said, that heaven and earth shall fly away, because neither the saints of heaven shall there favor thee with their intercession, neither can the priests of the earth assist thee with the sacraments of the church. There shall be place for nothing that may help thee. What would then a sinner give for leave to make one poor confession when it is too late? That which would now serve thy turn, and thou despisest, thou wouldst then have done and canst not. Provide thyself, therefore, in time, whilst it may avail thee, and defer it not till that instant wherein nothing can do thee good. Now thou mayst help thyself; now the saints will favor thee: expect not that moment wherein thy own endeavors will be useless, and wherein the saints will not assist thee. To the end we may frame a more lively conceit of what has been said, I will relate a story, which St. Peter Damian (Lib. 1. Epist. 10.)

rehearses, in an epistle of his to pope Alexander II., whereof the saint says, it caused dread in him as often as it came to his mind. Thus it was:—Two men going to fell wood in a forest, there issued forth a serpent, ugly, and of a huge size, with two heads, and the mouths of both open, thrusting out their tongues, with three points or small darts in each of them, and, seeming to cast out fire at his eyes, set upon them. One of the two men, of more spirit and courage, at the first assault of the serpent, struck it with his hatchet, and cut off one of its heads; but, unfortunately, let fall his hatchet. The serpent, feeling himself wounded, full of fury and rage, took him at the disadvantage without his weapon, and wound his train round about his body. The miserable man cried out to his companion for help, or at least that he would give him his hatchet to defend himself, or do some execution upon his enemy, that was now dragging him towards his den. But his companion was so cowardly, that he durst not any way succor him, but, affrighted and astonished, fled away, leaving that wretched man in the power of the serpent, which with great rage carried him to his den without resistance, or any succor at all, notwithstanding the hideous cries and lamentations the poor captive made. This history is but a slight draught of what a sinner will experience, in the instant of the departure of his soul out of this life; when, without any aid at all or hope of it, he shall find himself at the mercy of the infernal dragon, who will use him with all violence imaginable. St. Peter Damian says, he could not express the horror this sad accident caused in him, insomuch that it made him tremble many times, to consider what passed between the serpent and the man in that den; there being nobody to afford any help to the poor fellow in that distress; where neither his strength nor his cries could any way avail him to decline the fury of that ugly monster now ready to tear him in pieces. Wherefore, if to be void of all hopes of temporal life, and to be in the power of a serpent, is a thing so dreadful, what fright and astonishment will it cause when a sinner, in the instant of God's judgment, shall see himself delivered over into the power of the infernal dragon, without all hopes of ever escaping from him; who will seize upon his soul, and carry it to the abyss of hell? Let us call to mind with dread, that which the holy prophet feared and said of the devil: "God grant, he lay not hold on my soul like a lion, when there will be none that will set me at liberty, or relieve me." O what a lamentable thing will it be, for one to see himself in the power of Lucifer, abandoned not only by men, but also by the angels, and by the Queen of men and angels, and even by God himself, Father of all mercies! Let us provide ourselves in time, for that which is to happen in a moment, on which depends our eternity. O moment, in which all time is lost, if a soul doth lose itself in it, and remains lost for

ever, how much dost thou avail us ! Thou givest an assurance to all the good works of this life, and causest an oblivion of all the pleasures and delights thereof, to the end that man may not wholly give himself over to them ; since they will then be of no benefit to him ; and that he may persevere in virtue, since it will not secure him, unless he persevere in it to the last.

SECTION II.

How can men be careless, seeing so important a business, as is the salvation of their souls, to depend upon an instant, wherein no new diligence nor preparations will avail them ? Since, therefore, we know not when that moment will be, let us not be any moment unprovided ; this is a business not to be one point of time neglected, since that point may be our damnation. What will a hundred years spent with great penance and austerity in the service of God ; profit us, if in the end of all those years we shall commit some grievous sin, and death shall seize upon us before repentance ? Let no man secure himself in his past virtues, but continue them until the end ; since, if he die not in grace, all is lost, and if he do, what matters it to have lived a thousand years in the greatest troubles and afflictions this world could lay upon him ? O moment, in which the just shall forget all his labors, and shall rest assured of all his virtues ! O moment, in which the pains of a sinner begin, and all his pleasures end ! O moment, which art certain to be, uncertain when to be, and most certain never to be again ; for thou art only once, and what is in thee determined can never be revoked in another moment ! O moment, how worthy art thou to be now fixed in our memory, that we may not hereafter meet thee to our eternal ruin and perdition ! Let us imitate the Abbot Elias (In vit. PP. l. 5. p. 565. apud Rot.), who was accustomed to say, that three things especially made him tremble : The first, when his soul was to be plucked out of his body ; the second, when it was to appear before God to receive judgment ; and the third, when sentence was to be pronounced. How terrible, then, is this moment wherein all these three things so terrible are to pass ? Let a Christian often whilst he lives, place himself in that instant ; from whence let him behold on the one part the time of his life, which he is to leave, and on the other, the eternity whereinto he enters ; and let him consider what remains to him of that, and what he hopes for in this. How short in that point of death did those nearhand a thousand years, which Methusalem lived, appear to him, and how long one day in eternity ? In that instant a thousand years of life shall appear to the sinner no more than one hour, and one hour of torments shall appear a thousand years. Behold thy life from this watch tower, from this horizon, and measure it with the

eternal; and thou shalt find it to be of no bulk nor extension. See how little of it remains in thy hands, and that there is no escaping from the hands of eternity. O dreadful moment, which cuts off the thread of time, and begins the web of eternity! Let us in time provide for this moment, that we may not lose eternity. This is that precious pearl for which we ought to give all that we have or are. Let it ever be in our memory, let us ever be solicitous of it, since it may every day come upon us. Eternity depends upon death, death upon life, and life upon a thread, which may either be broken, cut or burned, and that even when we most hope, and most endeavor to prolong it. A good testimony of this is that which Paulus Æmilius (Paulus Æmilius, l. 9. Accidit anno 1387.) recounts of Charles, king of Navarre, who having much decayed and weakened his bodily forces by his debaucheries, the physicians for his cure commanded linens, steeped in aquavivæ, to be wrapped close about his naked body. He who sewed them, having nothing in readiness to cut the thread, made use of a candle, which was at hand, to burn it; but the thread being wet with those spirits, took fire with such speed, as it fired the linen, and before it could be prevented, burned the body of the king in such a manner, that he immediately died. Upon a natural thread depended the life of this prince, which concluded in so disastrous a death; and no doubt the thread of life is as easily cut as that of flax; time is required for the one, but the other is broken in an instant; and there are more causes of ending our life, than there are of breaking the smallest twist. Our life is never secure, and therefore we ought ever to fear that instant which gives an end to time, and beginning to eternity.

Wonderful are the ways which death finds out, and most poor and contemptible those things upon which life depends; it hangs not only upon a thread, but sometimes upon so small a thing as a hair. So Fabius, a Roman senator, was choked with a hair, which he swallowed in a draught of milk. No door is shut to death; it enters where air cannot enter, and encounters us in the very actions of life. Small things are able to deprive us of so great a good. A little grain of a grape took away the life of Anacreon (Valer. Max. lib. vi.); and a pear, which Drusus Pompeius was playing with, fell into his mouth and choked him. The affections also of the soul, and the pleasures of the body, become the highway to death. Homer died of grief, and Sophocles of an excess of joy. Dionysius was killed with the good news of a victory which he obtained. Aurelianus died dancing, when he married the daughter of Domitian the emperor. Thales Milesius, when he was beholding the sports in the theatre, died of thirst. Upon small matters, and unexpected accidents, depends the success of that moment, upon which depends eternity. Let every one open his eyes, and assure not himself of that life which

has so many entrances for death : Let no man say, I shall not die to-day ; for many have thought so, and suddenly died that very hour. By so inconsiderable things, as we have spoken of, many have died, and thou mayst die without any of them. For a sudden death there is no need of a hair, or fish-bone to strangle thee, nor affliction of melancholy to oppress, or excess of sudden joy to surprise thee ; it may happen without all these exterior causes. A corrupt humor in the entrails, which flies into the heart without any body perceiving it, is sufficient to make an end of thee ; and it is to be admired that no more die suddenly, considering the disorders of our lives and frailties of our bodies ; we are not of iron or brass, but of soft and delicate flesh. A clock, though of hard metal, in time wears out, and has every hour need of mending, and the breaking of one wheel stops the motion of all the rest. There is more artifice in a human body than in a clock, and it is much more subtle and delicate. The nerves are not of steel, nor the veins of brass, nor the entrails of iron. How many have had their livers, or spleen, corrupted or displaced, and have died suddenly ? No man sees what he has within his body ; and such may his infirmity be, that although he thinks and feels himself well, yet he may die within an hour. Let us all tremble at what may happen.

CHAPTER IV.

Why the End of Temporal Life is terrible.

DEATH, because it is the end of life, is by Aristotle said to be "the most terrible of all things terrible." What would he have said, if he had known it to be the beginning of eternity, and the gate through which we enter into that vast abyss, no man knowing upon what side he shall fall into that profound and bottomless depth ? If death be terrible for ending the business and affairs of life, what is it for ushering in that instant, wherein we are to give an account of life, before that terrible and just Judge, who therefore died that we might use it well ? It is not the most terrible part of death to leave the life of this world, but to give an account of it to the Creator of the world ; especially in such a time wherein he is to use no mercy. This is a thing so terrible that it made holy Job tremble, notwithstanding he had so good an account to make, who was so just, that God himself gloried in having such a servant. The Holy Ghost testifies, that he sinned not in all that he had spoken in his troubles and calamities, which were sent him, not as a punishment for his sins, but as a trial of his patience, proposing him to us as an example of virtue and constancy ; and he

himself protests, that his conscience did not accuse him; yet for all this, he was so fearful of the strict judgment, which God passes in the end of the world, that, amazed at the severity of his divine justice, he cries out in his discourse with the Lord, "Who will give me, that thou protect and hide me in hell, whilst thy fury passes?" Whereupon Dionysius Rikellius (*Dionys. Rikel. art. 16. de noviss.*) affirms, that that instant, wherein the judgment of God is to be given, is not only more terrible than death, but more terrible than to suffer the pains of hell for some certain time, and this not only to those who are to be damned, but even to those who are elected for heaven. Since therefore Job, being so just and holy, trembled at the apprehension of that divine judgment, when it was yet far from him, and when we use not to be so sensible as of things at hand, without doubt when a sinner shall in that instant perceive himself to have displeased his Redeemer and Creator, although but by small faults, yet it will afflict him more than the suffering of the greatest pains; for which St. Basil (*Basil, hom. contra divites avaros*) judged, that it was less to suffer eternal torments, than the confusion of that day; and therefore pondering that reprehension, given to the rich man in the gospel, "Fool, this night thy soul shall be taken from thee. Whose, then, shall be the riches which thou hast gotten?" the saint avers, that this mock, this taunt, did exceed an eternal punishment.

Death is terrible for many weighty reasons, and every one sufficient to cause in us a mortal fear, whereof not the least is the sight of the offended Judge, who is not only judge, but party, and a most irrefragable witness, in whose visage shall then appear such a severity against the wicked, that St. Austin says, he had rather suffer all manner of torments, than behold the face of his angry Judge. And St. Chrysostom says (*Chrys. hom. 24. in Matt.*), "It were better to be struck with a thousand thunderbolts, than to behold that countenance so meek, and full of sweetness, estranged from us, and those eyes of peace and mildness, not enduring to behold us." The only sight of an image of Christ crucified (*Rad. in opusc. et in annuis Societ.*), which appeared with wrathful and incensed eyes, although in this life, when the field of mercy is open, was sufficient so to astonish three hundred persons who beheld it, that they fell to the ground senseless, and without motion, and so continued for the space of some hours. How will it then amaze us, when we shall behold not a dead image, but Jesus Christ himself alive, not in the humility of the cross, but upon a throne of majesty, and seat of justice; not in the time of mercy, but in the hour of vengeance: not naked, with pierced hands, but armed against sinners with the sword of justice, when he shall come to judge and revenge the injuries which they have done him! God is as righteous in his justice, as in his mercy; and as he has allotted a time for mercy,

so he will for justice ; and as in this life the rigor of his justice is, as it were, repressed and suspended, so, in that point of death, when the sinner shall receive judgment, it shall be let loose, and overwhelm him. A great and rapid river, which should, for thirty or forty years together, have its current violently stopped, what a mass of waters would it collect in so long a space ; and if it should then be let loose, with what fury would it overrun, and bear down all before it, and what resistance could withstand it ? Since then the divine justice, which the prophet Daniel (ch. vii.) compares not to an ordinary river, but to a river of fire, for the greatness and severity of the rigor, shall be repressed for thirty or forty years, during the life of a man, what an infinity of wrath will it amass together, and with what fury will it burst out upon the miserable sinner in the hour of death ! All this rigor and severity shall the wretched caitiff behold in the face of the offended Judge. And therefore the prophet Daniel says, that a river of fire issued from his countenance, and that his throne was of flames, and the wheels of it burning fire, because all shall then be fire, rigor and justice. He sets forth to us his tribunal and throne with wheels, to signify thereby the force and violence of his omnipotency, in executing the severity of his justice ; all which shall appear in that moment, when sinners shall be brought to judgment, when the Lord (as David says) shall speak to them in his wrath, and confound them in his fury.

Which is also declared by other prophets, in most terrible and threatening words. Isaias says (ch. lvi.), "The Lord will come clothed in garments of vengeance, and covered with a robe of zeal ; and he will give to his adversaries his indignation, and his enemies shall have their turn." And the wise man, to declare it more fully, says, "His zeal," that is, his indignation, "shall take up arms, and shall arm the creatures to revenge him of his enemies : he shall put on justice as a breast-plate : he shall take the head piece of righteous judgment, and embrace the inexpugnable shield of equity, and shall sharpen his wrath as a lance." The prophet Osee (ch. xiii.) declares the same, proposing the judge to us, not only as an enraged and armed man, but a fierce and cruel beast ; and therefore, speaking in the person of God, says, "I will appear to them in that instant, as a bear that hath been robbed of her whelps ; I will tear their entrails in pieces, and will devour them as a lion." There is no beast more fierce of nature than a lion, or bear which has lost her young ones, which will furiously assault him she first meets with ; and yet God, whose nature is infinite goodness, would compare himself to so savage and cruel beasts, to express the terror of his justice and rigor, with which he is that day to show himself against sinners. The consideration of this wrought so much with Abbot Agathon (In vitis Patrum), when he was at the point of

dying, that he continued three days in admiration, his eyes for fear and dread continually broad open, without moving from one side to the other. Certainly all comparisons and exaggerations fall short of what it shall be, since that day is "the day of wrath and calamity." That is the day when the Lord shall speak aloud, in lieu of the many days wherein he has been silent. That is the day of which he spoke by his prophet: "I held my peace, and was mute; but I will then cry out, as a woman in labor." That day shall take up all his justice, and shall recompense for all his years of sufferance. That day shall be purely of justice, without mixture of mercy, hope of compassion, help, favor or any other patronage but of our works. This is signified in that which Daniel says, that the throne and tribunal of God was of flames, and that there shall proceed from his face a river of fire; because fire, besides that it is the most active, nimble and vehement of all the elements, is also the most pure, not admitting the mixture of any thing. The earth contains mines of metals, and quarries of stone; the water suffers in her bosom variety of fishes; the air multitudes of vapors, and exhalations, and other bodies; but fire endures nothing, it melts the hardest metals, reduces stones into cinders, consumes living creatures, converts trees into itself, inso-much as it is not only impatient of a companion, but infuses its own qualities into what it meets with, and turns even what is contrary to it into its own substance and nature; it does not only melt snow, but makes it boil, and makes cold iron burn. So shall it be in that day; all shall be rigor and justice, without mixture of mercy; nay, the very mercies which God has used towards a sinner, shall then be an argument and food for his justice.

O man, who hast now time, consider in what condition thou shalt see thyself in that instant, when neither the blood of Christ shed for thee, nor the Son of God crucified, nor the intercession of the most blessed Virgin, nor the prayers of saints, nor the divine mercy itself shall avail thee, but shall only behold an incensed and revenging God, whose mercies shall then only serve to augment his justice. Thou shalt then perceive that none will take thy part, but all will be against thee. The most holy Virgin, who is the mother of mercy, the mercy of God himself, and the blood of thy Redeemer, will all be against thee; and only thy good works shall stand for thee. This life once past, thou art to expect no patron, no protector, but thy virtuous actions only shall accompany thee; and when thy angel guardian, and all the saints thy advocates, shall leave thee, they only shall not forsake thee. See that thou provide thyself for that day; take care thou now benefit thyself by the blood of Christ, for thy salvation; if not, it will only serve for thy greater damnation. The whole world was amazed at the manner of the condemnation of Pyrrhus the heretic (Theoph. an. 20. Herac. Imper. ut habetur in tom.

2. p. 2. Concil. in notis ad vitam Theodori Papæ), by pope Theodorus, who, calling a council at Rome, and placing himself close by the body of St. Peter, in the presence of the whole assembly, took the consecrated chalice, and pouring the blood of Christ into the ink, did with his own hand write the sentence of excommunication and anathema, by which he separated Pyrrhus from the church of Christ. This dreadful manner of proceeding brought a fear upon all those who heard it. Do thou then tremble, to whom it may happen, that the blood of thy Redeemer shall only serve as a sentence of thy eternal death. For so severe will the divine justice be in that day against a sinner, that if it were needful for his condemnation, to confirm the sentence with the blood of Christ, it should (although once shed upon the cross for his salvation) then only serve to his damnation and eternal reprobation. If this be true (as nothing can be more certain), how come we to be so careless? how come we to laugh and rejoice? With great reason an old hermit (In vitis Pat. lib. 5.) in the desert, beholding another laugh, reprehended him for it, saying, We are to give a strict account before the Lord of heaven and earth, the most inflexible Judge, and darest thou be merry? How dare that sinner laugh, since that instant will come, wherein it will not profit him to weep? why does he not now with tears ask pardon for his sins, when after death he cannot obtain it? There shall be then no mercy, no remedy, no protection from God or man, no defence but what each man has from his own works. Let us then endeavor they may be good ones, since we have nothing in the other life to trust to but them. The rich man shall not then have multitudes of servants to set forth his greatness and authority, nor well-fed lawyers to defend his process; only his good works shall bestead him, and they only shall defend him; and in that instant, when even the mercy of God shall fail him, and the blood of Christ shall not appease the divine justice, only his good works shall not fail him; then, when their treasures, which have been heaped up in this world, and guarded with so much care, shall fail their masters, their alms bestowed on the poor shall not fail them; there, when their children, kindred, friends and servants shall all fail them, the strangers whom they have lodged, the sick whom they have visited in the hospitals, and the needy whom they have succored, shall not fail them. The rich man is to leave his wealth behind him, without knowing who shall possess it; his good works shall go along with him, and they only, when nothing else can, shall avail him; neither shall Christ, who is the Judge of the living and the dead, at that time admit of other patrons or advocates. Let us then take heed we turn not those against us, which are only at that dreadful time to bestead us.

It is to be admired, how many dare do ill in the presence of

that Judge, with whom nothing can prevail but doing well; and the wonder is much the greater, that we dare with our evil works offend him, who is to judge them. The thief is not so impudent as to rob his neighbor, if the magistrate look on, but would be held a fool, if he should rob or offend the magistrate himself in his own house: how dares, then, this poor thing, man, injure the very person of his most upright and just Judge (before whom it is most certain he shall appear) to his face, in his own house, in so high a manner as to prefer the devil, his and our greatest enemy, before him? How great was the malice of the Jews, when they judged it fitter, that Barabbas should live, than the Son of God! Let the sinner then consider his own insolence, who judges it better to please the devil, than Christ his Redeemer. Every one who sins makes as it were a judgment, and passes a sentence in favor of Satan against Jesus Christ. Of this unjust judgment of man, the Son of God, who is most unjustly sentenced by a sinner, will at the last day take a most strict and severe account. Let him expect, from his own injustice, how great is to be the divine justice against him. Let a Christian therefore consider that he has not now his own, but the cause of Christ in hand. Let him take heed how he works, since all his actions are to be viewed and reviewed by his Redeemer. An artist who knew his work, and was to appear before some king, or to be examined by some great master in the same art, would strive to give it the greatest perfection of his skill. Since, therefore, all our works are to appear before the King of heaven, and the chief master of virtues, Jesus Christ, let us endeavor that they may be perfect and complete, and the rather, because he is not to examine them for curiosity, but to pass upon us a sentence, either of condemnation or eternal happiness. Let us then call to mind, that we are to give an account to God Almighty, and let us therefore take heed what we do; let us weep for what is amiss; let us forsake our sins, and strive to do virtuous actions; let us look upon ourselves as guilty offenders, and let us stand in perpetual fear of the Judge, as Abbot Anno advises us: of whom it is reported in the book of the lives of the fathers, translated by Pelagius (In vitis Pat. lib. 5.) the cardinal, that being demanded by a young monk, what he should do that might most profit him, answered, "Entertain the same thoughts with the malefactors in prison, who are still inquiring, 'Where is the Judge? When will he come?'" every hour expecting their punishment, and weeping for their misdemeanors. In this manner ought the Christian ever to be in fear and anxiety, still reprehending himself, and saying, "Alas, wretch that I am, how shall I appear before the tribunal of Christ? how shall I be able to give an account of all my actions?" If thou shalt always have these thoughts, thou mayst be saved, and shalt not fail of obtaining what thou demandest

towards thy salvation ; and all will be little enough. St. John Climacus (Climac. gra. 6.) writes of a certain monk, who had lived long with small fervor and edification, who, falling into a grievous infirmity, wherein he remained some space without sense or feeling, was, during that time, brought before the tribunal of God, and from thence returned to life, wherein he continued ever after in that fear and astonishment, that he caused the door of his little cell, which was so small and narrow, that he had scarce room to move in it, to be stopped up, and there remained as it were enclosed in prison the space of twelve years, during which time he never spoke with any, nor fed upon any thing but bread and water, but sat ever meditating upon what he had seen in that rapture ; whereon his thoughts were so intent, that he never moved his eyes from the place where they were fixed, but persevering still in his silence and astonishment, could not contain the tears from abundantly flowing down his aged face. At last (says the saint), his death now drawing near, we broke open the door, and entered into his cell, and having asked him in all humility, that he would say something to us of instruction, all we could obtain from him was this : " Pardon me, fathers ; he who knew what it were truly, and with his whole heart, to think upon death, would never have the boldness to sin." The rigor of divine judgment, which is to pass after death, occasioned in this monk so great change and penitence of life.

SECTION II.

The second Cause of the Terribleness of Death, which is, The laying open of all, wherein we have offended in this Life.

ANOTHER thing of great horror is to happen in the end of life, which shall make that hour, wherein the soul expires, most horrible to sinners, and that is the sight of their own sins, whose deformity and multitude shall then clearly and distinctly appear to them ; and although now we remain in ignorance of many, and see the guilt of none, they shall then, when we leave this life, fully discover themselves as they are, both in number and in quality. This is also signified to us by the prophet Daniel, when he says, that the throne of the tribunal of God was of flaming fire, whose nature is not only to burn, but to enlighten ; and, therefore, in that divine judgment shall not only be executed the rigor of his justice, but the ugliness likewise of human malice shall be discovered. The Judge himself shall not only appear severe and implacable, but our sins shall be laid open before us, and the sight of them shall make us quake and tremble with fear and astonishment ; especially when we shall perceive them to be manifest to him, who is both judge and party. Wherefore it is

said in one of the psalms: "We are dismayed, O Lord, with thy wrath, and troubled with thy fury!" and immediately giving the reason of that trouble, he says, "Because thou hast set our wickedness before thee and placed them in thy sight." The monstrosity of sin is now covered, and we perceive it not, and are not therefore much troubled; but in that instant of death, when the ugliness of it shall appear, the very sight of it will wholly confound us. Our sins now seem to us but light and trivial, and we see not half of them; but in our leaving of this life, we shall find them heavy, grievous and insupportable. A great beam, whilst it floats upon the river, a child may move, and draw it from place to place, and the half of it remains hidden and covered below the waters; but drawn to land, many men will not suffice to remove it, and the whole bulk of it will be then clearly discovered; so in the waters of this tempestuous and unstable life, our faults appear not heavy, and the half of them are concealed from us; but this life once ended, we shall then feel their weight, discover their bulk, and shall groan under so heavy and grievous a burthen.

These doubtless are the two swords, which then shall mortally wound the conscience of a sinner: First, when he shall perceive the innumerable multitude of his sins; and then their monstrous deformity. And to begin with the multitude, how shall he remain amazed, when he shall see a number of his actions to be sins, which he never thought to be such; and, which is more, when he shall find that to be a fault, which he thought to be a laudable work. For this it is said in one of the psalms: "When I shall take him, I will judge righteousness;" for many actions, which in the eyes of men seem virtues, will then be found vices in the sight of God. If in human judgments there be so great a difference, that young men, and those that follow the world, often esteem that for a virtue, which the wise and ancient repute as an error, how different shall be the divine judgment from that of men, since the Holy Ghost says by his prophet, that the judgments of God are a great abyss, and that his thoughts are as far distant from the thoughts of men, as heaven is from earth! And if spiritual men are so clear-sighted, that they condemn with truth what worldlings praise, what shall be those divine eyes, which are able to perceive a stain in what appears angelical purity? And if, as the Scripture says, he found wickedness in the angels, what vice can remain hid in the sons of men? Our Lord himself says by one of his prophets: "I will search Jerusalem with a candle." If so strict inquiry be to be made in the holy city of Jerusalem, what shall be in Babylon? If God shall use such rigor with the just, how shall he dissemble with his enemies? Then shall be brought to light the works which we have done, and those which we have left undone; the evil of that action which

we have committed, and the good of that which we have omitted. Neither is there account to be taken only of the evil which we do, but of the good also which we do not well; all will be strictly searched and narrowly looked into, and must pass by many eyes. The devil, as our accuser, shall frame the process of our ~~whole~~ life, and shall accuse us of all he knows; and if any thing ~~shall~~ escape his knowledge, it shall not therefore be concealed; for our own conscience shall cry out, and accuse us of it; and lest our conscience might flatter us or be ignorant of some faults, our angel guardian, who is now our governor and tutor, shall then be the fiscal and accuser, calling for divine justice against us, and shall discover what our own souls are ignorant of. And if the devil, our conscience, and angel guardian shall fail in any thing, as not knowing all, the Judge himself, who is both party and witness, and whose divine knowledge penetrates into the bottom of our wills, shall there declare many things for vices, which were here esteemed for virtues. O strange way of judgment, where none denies, and all accuse, even the offender accuses himself; and where all are witnesses, even the Judge and party! O dreadful judgment, where there is no advocate, and four accusers, the devil, thy conscience, thy angel guardian, and thy very Judge, who will accuse thee of many things, which thou thoughtest to have alleged for thy defence!

O how great shall then be the confusion, when that shall be found a sin, which was thought a service! Who would have imagined, but that Oza, when he upheld the Ark in danger of falling, had rather done a laudable action, than an offence? Yet the Lord chastised it as a great sin, with the punishment of a most disastrous death; showing thereby, how different the divine judgments are from those of men. Who would not have thought David's numbering of his people to have been an act of policy and discretion? Yet God judged it an offence, and punished it with an unexampled pestilence, which in so short a time destroyed seventy thousand persons. When Saul, urged by his approaching enemies, and the long delays of Samuel, offered sacrifice, he thought he had done an act of the greatest virtue, which is religion; but God called it by the name of a grievous sin, and for doing it reproved him, and cast him off from being king. Who would not have judged it an act of magnanimity and clemency, when Achab (3 Rég. c. 20.), having conquered Benhadad, king of Syria, granted him his life, and took him up to sit by him in his royal chariot? But this, which was so much esteemed and praised by men, was so disagreeable to God, that he told him by his prophet, that he should die for it, and that he, and his people, should bear the punishment which was designed for the Syrians and their king. If, then, the judgment of God in this life is so far different from that of men, what shall it be in that most

dreadful hour, which God has reserved for the executing of his divine justice? Then all shall be laid open, and confusion shall cover the sinner with the multitude of his offences. How shall he blush to see himself in the presence of the King of heaven in so foul and squalid garments! A man is said to remain confounded, when either the issue of things falls out contrary to what he hoped and looked for, or when he comes off with indignity or disparagement, where he expected honor and reward; how confounded then shall a sinner be, when those works of his, which he thought virtues, shall be found vices; imagining he has done service, shall perceive he has offended; and hoping for a reward, shall meet with punishment! If a man, when he is to speak with some great prince, desire to be decently and well clad, how will he be out of countenance to appear before him dirty and half naked! How shall, then, a sinner be ashamed to see himself before the Lord of all, naked of good works, and defiled with abominable and horrible crimes! For besides the multitude of sins, whereof his whole life shall be full, the heinousness of them shall be also laid open before him, and he shall tremble at the sight of that, which he now thinks but a trivial fault. For then shall he see clearly the ugliness of sin, the dissonancy of it to reason, the deformity it causes in the soul, the injury it does to the Lord of the world, his ingratitude to the blood of Christ, the prejudice it brings to himself, hell, into which he falls, and eternal glory, which he loses. The least of these were sufficient to cover his heart with sadness and inconsolable grief; but all together, what amazement and confusion shall they cause! especially when he shall perceive that not only mortal, but even venial sins produce an ugliness in the soul beyond all corporal deformities which can be imagined. If the sight of only one devil be so horrible, that many servants of God have said, that they would rather suffer all the torments of this life, than behold him for one moment; all his deformity proceeding but from one only mortal sin, which he committed; for before, the devils were by nature most excellent and beautiful; in what condition shall a sinner be, who shall not only behold all devils, in all their ugliness, but shall see himself perhaps more ugly than many of them, having as many deformities, as he has committed mortal and venial sins! Let him, therefore, avoid them now, for all are to come to light, and he must account for all, even to the last farthing.

Neither is this account to be made in gross only, for the greatest and most apparent sins, but even for the least and smallest. What lord is so strict with his steward, that he demands an account for trifles, for the tag of a point, nor suffers him to pass a halfpenny, without informing him how it was spent? In human tribunals, the judge takes no notice of small matters; but in the courts of divine judicature, nothing passes: the least things are

as diligently looked into as the greater. A confirmation of this is a story written by different authors (Joh. Major. Judic. exem. 8. ex collect.): that there were two religious persons, of holy and laudable conversation, who did mutually love one another with great affection: one of them chanced to die, and after death appeared to the other (being then in prayer), in poor and torn garments, and with a most sorrowful and dejected countenance. He who was in prayer, demanded of him, what was the cause of his appearing in that sad manner. To whom he answered, repeating it three times; No man will believe! No man will believe! No man will believe! Being urged to declare further what he would say, he proceeded thus: No man can imagine how strict God is in taking his accounts, and with what rigor he chastises sinners. In saying this, he vanished. By that which has happened to many servants of God, even before their departure out of this life, may be seen the rigor with which this account shall be taken after death. St. John Climacus (Clim. gr. 7.) writes of a certain monk, who being very desirous to live in solitude and quiet, after he had exercised himself many years in the labors of a monastical life, and obtained the grace of tears and fasting, with many other privileges of virtue, he built a cell at the foot of that mountain where Elias, in time past, saw that sacred and divine vision. This reverend father being of so great austerity, desired yet to live a more strict and penitent life, and therefore passed from thence into a place called Sides, which belonged to the anchorite monks, who live in great perfection and retirement; and having lived a long time, with much rigor, in that place, which was far remote from all consolation, and distant seventy miles from any dwelling or habitation of men, at last he came to have a desire to return to his first cell, in that sacred mountain, where remained in his absence, for the keeping of it, two most religious disciples of his, of the land of Palestine. Some short time after his return, he fell into an infirmity, and died. The day before his death he became much astonished and amazed, and keeping still his eyes open, he looked ghastly about him, sometimes on the one side of the bed, and then on the other, as if he saw some who demanded an account from him of something which was past; to whom he answered, in the hearing of all who were present, saying sometimes, "So it is truly; but for this I have fasted so many years." At other times he said, "Certainly, it is not so; thou liest; I never did it." And again, "It is true, I did so; but wept for it, and so many times ministered for it to the necessity of my neighbors." Other times, "Thou accusest me truly; I have nothing to say; but God is merciful." And, certainly, that invisible and strict inquisition was fearful and horrible to those who were present. Alas! says the saint, what will become of me,

sinner, since so great a follower of a solitary and retired life knew not what to answer! He who had lived forty years a monk, and obtained the grace of tears, and as some affirmed to me, had in the desert fed a hungry leopard, which meekly repaired to him for food; yet, after all this sanctity, at his departure out of this life, so strict an account was demanded of him, as he left us uncertain what was his judgment, and what the sentence and determination of his cause. We read in the Chronicles (Chronic. S. Franc. 2. p. lib. 4. c. 35.) of the Minorites, that a novice of the order of St. Francis, being now almost out of himself struggling with death, cried out with a terrible voice, saying, "Wo is me! O that I had never been born!" A little after he said, "I am heartily sorry." And not long after he added, "Put something of the merits of the passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Then he said, "Now 'tis well." The religious much admired, that a young man so innocent, should speak things so dreadful, and with such a strange noise. When the young man was returned to his senses, they demanded of him to declare to them the meaning of those words and great cries. He answered them, "I saw, that in the judgment of Almighty God, so strict an account was taken even of idle words, and other things that seemed very little, and they weighed them so exactly, that the merits, in respect of the demerits, were almost nothing at all; and for this reason I gave that first terrible and sad outcry. Afterwards I saw, that the demerits were weighed with great attention, and that little regard was made of the merits; for this reason I spoke the second words. And seeing that the merits were so few and inconsiderable for to be justified, I spoke the third: and in regard, that with the merits of the passion of Christ, our Saviour, the balance, wherein my good works were, weighed more than the other, immediately a favorable sentence was given in my behalf; for this reason I said, "Now 'tis well." And having said this, he gave up the ghost.

SECTION III.

The third Cause of the Terribleness of the End of Temporal Life, which is the Charge which shall be given of Divine Benefits received.

THERE is, also, in the end of life, another cause of much terror to sinners, which is, the lively knowledge which they shall have of the divine benefits received, and the charge which shall be laid against them, for their great ingratitude and abuse of them. This is also signified by what the prophet Daniel spoke of the throne and tribunal of God. For, he not only said, it was of flames of fire, by which was given us to understand the rigor of divine justice against sinners, signified by the violence, heat, and

activity of fire, and the discovery and manifestation of sins, signified by the light and brightness of the flames; but he also adds, that from the face of the Judge there proceeded a heady and rapid river, which was also of fire; signifying, by the swiftness of the course, and the issuing of it from God, the multitude of his graces and benefits, which, flowing from the divine goodness, are communicated and poured down upon his creatures. His saying, that this so great river shall, in that day, be of fire, is to make us understand the rigor of that charge against us, for our abuse of those infinite benefits bestowed, together with the light and clearness wherewith we shall know them, and the horror and confusion which shall then seize upon us for our great ingratitude, and the small account we have made of them; so that sinners, in that instant, are not only to stand in fear of their own bad works, but of the grace and benefits of God Almighty, conferred upon them. Another mourning weed and confusion shall cover them, when they shall see what God has done to oblige and assist them towards their salvation, and what they, on the contrary, have done, to draw upon them their own damnation. They shall tremble to see what God did for their good, and that he did so much, as he could do no more; all which has been misemployed and abused by themselves. This is so clear and evident on the part of God Almighty, that he calls men themselves as witnesses and judges of the truth; and therefore, speaking under the metaphor of a vineyard, by his prophet Isaiah (ch. v.), he says in this manner: "Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard; what ought I to have done more unto my vineyard, and have not done it?" And after the incarnation of the Son of God, the Lord turns again to upbraid men with the same resentment, and signifies more fully the multitude of his benefits, under the same metaphor of a vineyard, which a man planted (Matt. xxi.), and so much cherished and esteemed it, that he sent thither his only son, who was slain in the demand of it. Let, therefore, men enter into judgment against themselves, and let them be judges, whether God could have done more for them, and has not done it; they being still so ungrateful towards their Creator, as if he had been their enemy, and done them some notorious injury.

Coming, therefore, to consider every one of these benefits by itself, the first which occurs is that of the creation, which was signified by our Saviour Jesus Christ, when he said, that "he planted a vineyard:" and what could God do more for thee, since, in this one benefit of thy creation, he gave thee all that thou art, both in soul and body? If, wanting an arm, thou wouldst esteem thyself much obliged and be very thankful to him, who should bestow one upon thee, which were sound, strong and useful, why art thou not so to God, who has given thee arms, heart, soul, body

and all? Consider what thou wert before he gave thee a being: nothing; and now thou enjoyest not only a being, but the best being of the elemental world. Philosophers say, that between being and not being, there is an infinite distance. See then what thou owest to thy Creator, and thou shalt find thy debt to be no less than infinite, since he has not only given thee a being, but a noble being, and that not by necessity, but out of an infinite love, and by election, making choice of thee amongst an infinity of men possible, whom he might have created. If lots were to be cast amongst a hundred persons for some honorable charge, how fortunate would he be esteemed, who should draw the lot from so many competitors! Behold then thy own happiness, who, from an absolute nothing, has lighted upon a being, amongst an infinity of creatures possible. And whence proceeds this singular favor, but from God, who out of those numberless millions had picked out thee, leaving out many others, who, if he had created them, would have served him better than thyself? See then what God could have done for thee and has not, having chosen thee without any desert of thine from amongst so many, and preferred thee before those, whom he foresaw would have been more thankful. Besides this, he not only created thee by election, and gave thee a noble being, but supernatural happiness being no way due to thy nature, he created thee for it, and gave thee for thy end the most high and eminent that could be imagined, to wit, the eternal possession of thy Creator. It was enough for God to create thee for a natural happiness, conformable to what thou wert: but he, not to leave any thing undone which he could do, created thee for a supernatural blessedness, insomuch as there is no creature which has a higher end than thyself. See then if God could do more for thee, and has not, and see what thou oughtest to do for him; see whereunto thou art obliged. For this only benefit, thou oughtest not to move hand nor foot, but for the service of so good and gracious a God. A laborer who plants a tree, has a right to the fruit; and God who created thee, has a right to thy works, which are the fruits of man. For this reason, at the garment of the high-priest, which represented the benefit of our creation, were hung many pomegranates, which are the noblest fruit of trees, and bears a crown, to signify that the good fruits of holy works, which we ought to produce, are to be crowned with a perfect and pure intention. See then if thou canst do more for God; for God could do no more for thee, than to create thee for so high and eminent an end, as is the possession of himself, being no ways due to thy feeble and frail nature.

It being then so great a benefit to have created thee, it is yet a greater to have preserved and suffered thee until this instant, without casting thee into a thousand hells for thy sins and offences. This grace of conservation our Saviour noted, when he said, that

he compassed and enclosed his vineyard, which was for the preservation of it. See, then, what thy Creator, in this matter of conservation, could have done more than he has done for thee, since, being his enemy, he has preserved thee as his friend. From how many, for one only fault committed, has he withdrawn his preservation, and suffered them to die in that sin, for which they are now in hell; and some of them, if they had been pardoned, would have proved more grateful than thou? Behold, how many angels, for their first offence, he threw headlong down from heaven, and expected them no longer! and yet still expects thee. See, if he could do more for thee; and see what thou art to do for him. Consider, that thou owest him for preserving thee, as much as for creating thee, preservation being a continued creation, and more for preserving and suffering thee, although his enemy. In thy creation, although thou didst not deserve a being, yet thou demeritedst it not; but in thy preservation, thou hast deserved the contrary, which is, to be forsaken and abandoned.

But above all that is said, is the benefit which thou receivedst by the incarnation of the Son of God; which Christ signified when he said, that the Lord of the vineyard sent his son. See if God could have done more for his own salvation than he did for thine, sending into the world his only begotten Son to be incarnated for thee. A greater work than this could not be done by the omnipotent arm of God. Consider, that he did not this for his angels, and yet did it for thee! See, then, if thou canst comply with the love thou owest him, with being less than a seraphim in thy affection. Consider, likewise, that it being in his power to redeem thee, by making himself an angel, and only interceding for thee, yet he would not deprive thy nature of this honor, but made himself a man; see if he could do more for thy good. By making himself an angel, he might have honored the angelical nature, and have likewise benefited thee; but he would not; but making himself a man, conferred both the honor and profit upon thee. And if it be true, what some doctors say, that God having proposed to the angels, that they were to adore a man, who was also to be God, and to be exalted above all their hierarchies, and that because they would not subject themselves to an inferior nature, they therefore fell, and became disobedient; see what thou owest to God, for this so singular a favor, who would make himself a man, that thou shouldst not be lost, although with the loss of so many angels better than thee. Behold from whence he drew thee by this benefit, which was from sin and hell; and at such a time when thy miserable condition was desperate of all other remedy; behold to what he exalted thee; to his grace, and to the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven. Behold in what manner, and with what singular love and affection he did it, even to his own loss and prejudice, and,

as the apostle says, by annihilating, as it were, himself, that he might exalt thee, taking upon him thy nature, when it was not needful, only that he might confer an honor upon thee, which he would not upon the angels. See what God could do more for thee; and see that thou mayst do much more for him, and dost not.

Of the benefit of our redemption, by the death and passion of Christ, the Lord himself was not forgetful, but signified it to us even before he died, saying, that the Son, whom the Lord of the vineyard sent, was slain in the pretence. What could the Son of God do more for thee than die and shed his blood for thy benefit, especially when it was not needful for thy redemption? In the rigor of justice it was necessary, that God should be incarnate, or make himself an angel to redeem thee; but to suffer and die, not at all. But such was his infinite love, that he would needs suffer, and that not with an ordinary death, but would die so ignominiously, that it seems he could not suffer more. Set before thy eyes Christ crucified upon Mount Calvary; see if a manner more infamous be possible or imaginable; executed publicly between two thieves, as a traitor and a heretic, for broaching false doctrine, and making himself king, as a traitor to Cæsar; two crimes so infamous, that they not only defame the person who commits them, but stain and infect his whole stock and lineage. Behold in what poverty he died, if greater can be thought on, to the end thou mayest see, if it were possible, he should do more for thee than what he did. Whilst he lived, he had not whereon to repose his head, but yet had clothes, wherewith to cover decently his nakedness; but when he died, even his garments failed him; neither found he one drop of water to refresh his sacred lips; even the earth refused him, wanting whereon to rest his reverend feet. Behold with what grief and pains he expired, since from head to foot he was but one continued wound; his feet and hands were pierced with nails, and his head with thorns. All was a high expression of an excessive love, and to do for thee what he could: see, then, what thou oughtest to do and suffer for him, who did and suffered for thee what he could, and could do what he would.

After all these benefits, consider his giving himself to thee for food and sustenance in the most holy Sacrament; which was noted by Christ, when he said, that the Lord of the vineyard built a press for the wine, in which he gave his most precious blood. It seems, that the persons of the most holy Trinity were in competition, and strove amongst themselves, who should most oblige man with their benefits and favors. Let us express it in this manner; for to conceive it, as it is in itself, the understanding of angels were not sufficient. Here may be applied, that which antiquity admired in two great and famous painters. Apelles

went to Rhodes, to see Protogenes, and not finding him at home, took a pencil, and drew a most subtle line, charging the servants, that they should tell their master, that he who drew that line was there to seek him. When Protogenes returned, they told him what had happened; who took the pencil, and drew a line of another color, through the middle of that which Apelles had drawn, and going about his business, commanded his servants, that if he came again, they should tell him, that he whom he sought for, had drawn that line through the middle of his. It seemed, there could not be imagined a higher favor, than that of the eternal Father to have given his only Son, and have delivered him up to death for man; but through the middle of this favor the Son drew another of excessive fineness and subtilty, which is the institution of the most blessed Sacrament, which some call an extension of the incarnation, and is a representation of the passion, and a character and memorial of the wonders of God. Here truly did the Son of God draw the line of his infinite love, and consummated all the divine benefits; not only giving himself for our benefit and behalf, but entering into our very breasts to solicit our love and affection. Anacreon writes, that standing at defiance with the god of love, and having resisted all his arrows, the god at last, when he had no more to shoot, shot himself, and penetrating his heart, compelled him to yield. What other are the benefits of our Lord God, than so many arrows of love which man resists? and not surrendering himself, neither at the benefit of creation, conservation, incarnation or passion, let him at last surrender himself at this, when God enters into his very breast to solicit his love. If he resists this also, what judgments await him? Whereupon St. Paul says, that he who presumes to communicate unworthily, eats and drinks the judgment of God, that is, swallows down the whole weight of divine justice.

Consider, then, how dreadful it shall be to a sinner, when he shall receive charge, not only of his own being, and his own life, but also of the being and life of God, of the incarnation, passion, life and death of Christ our Redeemer, who has so often given himself to him, in the Sacrament of his body and blood. The murderer who stands charged with the life of a man, although it be for some wicked person, yet he fears to be apprehended and brought to judgment; how is it, then, that he who is charged with the life of God, trembles not? O how fearful a thing is it, when a vile creature shall enter into judgment with his Creator, and shall be demanded an account of the blood of Christ, whose value is infinite! What account can he give of such a benefit, and of all the rest which he has received, even from the greatest to the least? when Christ shall say to him those words of St. Chrysostom (Chrysost. Hom. 24. in Matth.): "I, when thou hadst no being, gave thee one, inspired thee with a soul, and

placed thee above all things that are upon the earth. I for thee created heaven, air, sea, earth, and all things, and yet am dishonored by thee, and held more vile and base than the devil himself; and yet for all this have not ceased to do thee good, and bestowed upon thee innumerable benefits. For thy sake, being God, I was content to make myself a servant, was buffeted, spit upon, and condemned to a punishment of slaves; and to redeem thee from death, suffered death on the cross. In heaven I interceded for thee, and from thence sent thee the Holy Ghost: I invited thee to the kingdom of heaven, offered myself to be thy head, thy spouse, thy garment, thy house, thy root, thy food, thy drink, thy shepherd, thy brother; I chose thee for the heir of heaven, and drew thee out of darkness to light." To such excesses of love, what have we to answer, but to stand astonished and confounded, that we have been so ungrateful, and given occasion to the devil of one of the greatest scorns and injuries that could be put upon our Redeemer, when he shall say to him, "Thou createdst man; for him wast born in poverty, livedst in labors, and diedst in pains and torments. I have done nothing for him, but would have drank his blood, and sought to damn him into a thousand hells; and yet for all this, it is I whom he strives to please, and not thee. Thou dost prepare for him a crown of eternal glory, I desire to torment him in hell; and yet he had rather serve me without interest, than thee for thy promise of so great a reward. I should have been ashamed to have created and redeemed a wretch so ungrateful to him from whom he has received so great benefits; but since he loves me better than thee, let him be mine, to whom he has so often given up himself."

We are not only to give an account of these general benefits, but of those which are more particular; of the good examples which we have seen, of the instructions which we have heard, of the inspirations which have been sent us, and the sacraments which we have received; we have much to do to correspond with all these. Let us, therefore, tremble at that strict judgment; let us tremble at ourselves, who are so careless of that, for which all the care in the world is not sufficient. And if it were not for the blood of Christ, what would become of us? But the time for benefiting ourselves by that, will be then past: now is the time, and if we shall now despise and outrage it, in what case shall we be? Let us not misspend the time of this life; since so severe an account will be demanded of all the benefits which we have received, out of which is the time of this temporal life, and the blessings of it. Let us take heed what use we make of it; let us not lose it, since we are to answer for every part of it. This made holy Thalilæus (Sopron. in Prato spirituali, cap. 59. de Beato Thalilæo) tremble and weep bitterly, who being asked the cause

of his tears, answered : " This time is bestowed upon us wherein to do penance, and a most strict account will be demanded of us if we despise it." It is not ours, for which we are to answer ; we are not the lords of time ; let us not, therefore, dispose of it for our own pleasure, but for the service of God, whose it is. This consideration were sufficient to withdraw our affection from the goods of this life, and to settle it upon those which are eternal ; since we are not masters of time and the things which are in it, but are as stewards to account for it and them. Being therefore to give a reason how we have employed them for the service of God Almighty, let us not without reason abuse them for our own vain delight and pleasure.

CHAPTER V.

How God, even in this Life, passes a most rigorous Judgment.

ALL that we have hitherto spoken, concerning the rigor of the divine tribunal, before which the soul is at the end of life to appear, and to give an account to her Redeemer, is far short of what really is to be. To the end, therefore, that we may conceive it something better, I shall here propose the severity, wherewith God executes his judgments even in this life, wherein he makes use of mercy, that from thence we may collect the rigor of the other, where he is only to use his justice. By the prophet Ezekiel (ch. vii.) he speaks to his people thus : " I will pour out all my rage upon thee, and will accomplish my fury in thee ; I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will lay forth all thy wickedness against thee ; my eyes shall not pardon thee, neither will I have mercy. I will charge thee with all thy misdeeds, and thy abominations shall be in the midst of thee ; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord who smites." And presently he adds : " My wrath shall be upon all the people, the sword without, and pestilence and famine within ; he who is in the field, shall die by the sword, and they who are in the city, shall be devoured by pestilence and famine ; and they who fly, shall save themselves, and shall all remain in the mountains, as the doves of the valleys, trembling in their iniquity ; their hands shall be disjointed, and their knees shall dissolve into water, for the great fear and amazement which God in his wrath shall send upon them." But it is not much, that the Lord should deal thus with sinners, who have forsaken their God, since even against those who are desirous to do all for his honor, he proceeds with much rigor. Let us see how the prophet Zachary (ch. iii.) sets forth to us the high-priest who then lived, the son of Josedeck, as a lively representa-

tion of the divine judgment, whom he makes to appear before an angel, who there exercised the office of a judge, clothed in foul and polluted garments, insomuch that the Lord calls him a brand taken out of the fire, and Satan standing by his side to accuse him. If then this great priest, zealous for the glory of God, stood so dejected and confused, in the presence of an angel, as he appeared as a black and burned coal of hell, in unclean and sooty garments, how shall a grievous sinner, and despiser of the divine service, appear before God himself? But this is more fully signified in the Apocalypse, where our Saviour himself pronounced judgment against the seven bishops of Asia, who were then all alive, and most of them esteemed great servants of God, and so holy, as was St. Timothy the beloved disciple of St. Paul, St. Polycarp, St. Quadratus, St. Carpus, St. Sagaris, all in great opinion for sanctity and holiness of life. Let us first behold in what manner our Saviour Christ appeared, when he came to judge them, and after let us consider the rigorous charge which he laid against them. For the first, to signify, that nothing could be hid or concealed from him, he stood in the midst of seven candlesticks, or of seven lamps, like the golden candlestick in the temple, in each of which was a lighted candle; in his hand he held seven stars, whose beams and splendor enlightened all about him; and above all, his face was as the sun at mid-day in his greatest force, which leaves not the least atom undiscovered. In such a brightness of candles, stars and sun, there was no shadow, to give us to understand, that nothing, how little soever, can be hidden from the all-seeing eyes of our just Judge, to whom all things will appear, clearly and distinctly, as they are in themselves. But not content with so many arguments of the evidence, which he shall have of all offences, he adds, that the eyes of the Judge were as flaming fire, more penetrating than the eyes of a lynx, to see and search into all things, and to note, also, the rigor and severity wherewith he looks upon offences when he comes to judge them. This certainly were sufficient of itself, to set forth the rigor of his justice; but to make it appear yet more terrible, he declares it by another figure of a two-edged sword, which he held in his mouth, to denote that the rigor of his works shall be greater than those of his words, although his words themselves were as cutting swords. In conclusion, all was so full of terror and threatening, as, although it nothing concerned St. John, as being none of those who were to be judged, yet it caused so great a fear and amazement in him, that he fell as dead upon the ground. If then St. John, only beholding the wrathful countenance of our Lord, not against himself, but others, with whom also he intended to use mercy, it made his feet fail, and his pulse remain without motion; how shall it fare with that sinner, who shall behold him all incensed against him, and that at such a time, when he is only

to use his justice? I believe, that if the souls of sinners were capable of death, the terror of that sight would bereave them of a thousand lives.

Let us now see what was found by those eyes of fire, with which Christ so narrowly examined the works of those seven bishops, who were such as he himself vouchsafes to call them, angels. Truly he found much to reprehend in them, that it might be verified, which was spoken in Job, that he found iniquity in his angels. Who would have thought, that St. Timothy, of whom the apostle was so confident, and of whom he made so great esteem, should deserve that God should take away his chair, and deprive him of his church of Ephesus? Yet Christ found him worthy of so great a chastisement, and threatens to do it, if he did not amend; and complains, that he was falling from his former zeal, exhorting him to do penance, which certainly he performed, as perceiving it very necessary for him. Greater faults he found in the bishop of Pergamus, as also in him of Thiatira, who was St. Carpus; and in like manner exhorts them both to do penance. And that it may appear how different are the judgments of God from those of men, although the bishop of Sardis was held by all for a most holy man, that he had gained a great opinion of virtue, and that he did many good works, yet Jesus Christ found he was so far from being a saint, that he remained in mortal sin. O holy, good God! who would not tremble, that he who passed amongst men for an angel, should by thee be reputed as a devil? But no less dreadful is that which passed with the bishop of Laodicea, whose conscience did not accuse him of any thing, who thought he had complied with his obligations, that he exercised great virtues, had no remorse of any grievous fault, or matter of importance, and yet for all this he was so contrary in the divine sight, that the Lord says, he was miserable, poor, blind, and naked of all virtue. Well said the wise man, that "man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred." And David had reason to demand of God, that he would cleanse him from the sins he knew not. O most holy Lord, and most righteous Judge, how happens it that men fear thee not, since for what they themselves know, they ought to tremble; and although they hold themselves for just, and are not conscious of any enormous fault, yet that which thou knowest only is sufficient to condemn them? Let us tremble, that God is to demand an account of those sins, which we ourselves are ignorant of, as he did of this bishop of Laodicea, and also of sins committed by others, as he did of him of Thiatira. The divine eyes of Christ pierce not only into our secret sins, and the sins of others, but also discover those of omission; and therefore he reprehended the omission of the bishop of Pergamus, although he was very faithful to God in all good works, and sought his glory and the exaltation of his holy name; and likewise

search into all our evil works, as well known as hid, as well our own as others, and also into our good works, when they are not done with fervor and perfection. Let us tremble, that in St. Timothy he found his works not fervent; but much more that in the holy bishop of Philadelphia, who was irreprehensible, and had not slackened nor fallen off from his first zeal, yet he found wherein to reprehend him, not for commission of what was bad, not for omission of what was good, not for remission of his former fervor, but only because he had little virtue; whereas in truth, this most holy bishop had great merits, for which he was much favored and beloved by God. But as our obligations are infinite, so there is no virtue, no sanctity which in his sight appears not little. So precise, so exact is the divine judgment, that of seven bishops, who were reputed angels, he found in six wherewith to judge and reprehend them; in one negligence, in another inconstancy and dismayedness, in another slackness and remissness of zeal; in another weariness and want of perseverance, in another fear, in another tepidity and indiscretion, and in two at least, that they were in mortal sin. And if in such angels his divine eyes found wherewith to be offended, what will they find in us sinners?

The knowledge that Christ had judged them, was of great profit to those bishops, causing them ever after to comply with their duties, with great fervor; and for those who are known who they were, it is certain that they died saints, and for such are celebrated by the holy church. It may also be profitable to us to know, that we are likewise to be judged with equal rigor, that we may not offend him, to whom we owe so much; that we may not be tepid in his service, but perform our works fully, perfectly and completely. Let the tepid fear those words which our Saviour said to one of those bishops: "I would thou wert either hot or cold; but because thou art lukewarm, I shall begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." Of this menace, an interpreter notes, that it is more dreadful than if it had been of condemnation, as intimating something more in particular than is to be found in the common sort of reprobates, which is signified by that metaphor of vomit, which denotes an irreconcilable detestation on God's part, a casting off from his paternal providence, a denying of his efficacious helps, and a great hardness of heart in the offender. Let us tremble at this threat; be careful also, that so we may not hear from the mouth of Christ, that which he said to the bishop of Sardis: "I find not thy works full before my God. Let us therefore see how our charity stands, whether it be full or not. For it is not full, if we love this man, and not that; if we wish well to our benefactor, and abhor him who does us an injury; if we work only, and not also suffer; let us see if we bear the burthens of our neighbor, as if they were our own; if we prefer

the conveniency of others before our own ; if we embrace, with a desire of pleasing God Almighty, things hard and painful ; and if we love him, not with words, but deeds. Let us see if our humility be full ; if we do not only hate honors, but desire to be despised ; if we do not only not prefer ourselves before any, but abase ourselves below all. Let us see if our patience be full ; if we had not rather suffer this than that ; if we do not only suffer, but not complain. Let us see whether our obedience be full ; if we obey in things easy, and not in difficult and troublesome ; if our equal, and not inferior ; if we look upon God, and not upon man ; if we do it with repugnancy, and not with delight. See if the rest of thy virtues be full ; thou art to give an account of all ; endeavor to give a good one ; see if thou be not found in that day with vain and empty works ; for thou shalt not only be demanded, if thou hast done good ones, but if thou hast done them well. If even in this life God will chastise our carelessness, what will he do in the other !

Let us draw strength out of weakness, that we may with all our power and all our forces, serve him who has done so much for us. Let us see what we have received, that we may know what we are to return ; let us look upon the greatness of those benefits which have been conferred upon us, that we may know how to measure our gratitude accordingly ; and as the benefits of God have been full, and plentifully heaped upon us, let not our thanks and services be short and niggardly. Our Lord forgot not to put the seven prelates in mind of their obligation for his benefits ; and therefore said to the bishop of Sardis, " Keep in thy mind, in what manner thou hast received ; " because in divine benefits we are not only to be thankful for the substance, but for the manner and circumstances of them, that our gratitude may not only consist in the substance of good works, but in the manner and circumstance of doing them, performing them fully, perfectly and completely ; and seeing God has bestowed his benefits, out of his infinite love, upon us, let us also serve him with a perfect and unfeigned affection ; and since he has employed his omnipotency for our good and profit, let us employ our forces and faculties for his glory and service.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the End of all Time.

BESIDES the end of the particular time of this life, the universal end of all time is much to be considered ; that, since human ambition passes the limits of this life, and desires honor and a

famous memory after it, man may know, that after his death there is another death to follow, in which his memory shall also die, and vanish away as smoke. After we have finished the time of this life, the end of all time is to succeed, which is to give a period to all that we leave behind us. Let man therefore know, that those things, which he leaves behind for his memory after death, are as vain as those which he enjoyed in his life. Let him raise proud mausoleums; let him erect statues of marble; let him build populous cities; let him leave a numerous kindred; let him write learned books; let him stamp his name in brass, and fix his memory with a thousand nails; all must have an end: his cities shall sink, his statues fall, his family and lineage perish, his books be burned, his memory be defaced, and all shall end, because all time must end. It much imports us to persuade ourselves of this truth, that we may not be deceived in the things of this world, that not only our pleasures and delights are to end with death, but our memories at the farthest are to end with time; and since all are to conclude, all are to be despised as vain and perishing. Cicero, although immoderately desirous of fame and honor, as appears by a large epistle of his written to a friend (Cicer. in Ep. ad Luc.), wherein he earnestly entreats him to write the conspiracy of Catiline, which was discovered by himself, in a volume apart, and that he would allow something in it to their ancient friendship, and publish it in his life-time, that he might enjoy the glory of it whilst he lived; yet when he came to consider that the world was to end in time, he perceived that no glory could be immortal, and therefore says (In Somn. Scip.): "By reason of deluges and burnings of the earth, which must of necessity happen within a certain time, we cannot attain glory, not so much as durable for any long time, much less eternal." In this world no memory can be immortal, since time and the world itself are mortal; and the time will come, when time shall be no more. But this truth is like the memory of death, which by how much it is more important, by so much men think less of it, and practically do not believe it. But God, that his divine providence and care might not be wanting, has also in this taken order, that a matter of so great concernment should be published with all solemnity, first by his Son, afterwards by his apostles, and then by angels. And therefore St. John says in his Apocalypse, (ch. x.) that he saw an angel of great might and power, who descended from heaven, having a cloud for his garment, and his head covered with a rainbow, his face shining as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire, with the right foot treading upon the sea, and with the left upon the earth, sending forth a great and terrible voice, as the roaring of a lion, which was answered by seven thunders, with other most dreadful noises; and presently this prodigious angel lifts up his hand towards heaven.* But

wherefore all this ceremony? Wherefore this strange equipage? wherefore this horrid voice and thunder? All was to proclaim the death of time; and to persuade us more of the infallibility of it, he confirmed it with a solemn oath, conceived in a set form of most authentic words, lifting up his hands towards heaven, and swearing by him that lives for ever and ever, who created heaven and earth, and all which is in it, "There shall be no more time." With what could this truth be more confirmed, than by the oath of so great and powerful an angel?

The greatness and solemnity of the oath give us to understand the weight and gravity of the thing affirmed, both in respect of itself, and the importance for us to know it. If the death of a monarch or prince of some corner of the world, prognosticated by an eclipse or comet, cause a fear and amazement in the beholders, what shall the death of the whole world, and with it all things temporal, and of time itself, foretold by an angel, with so prodigious an apparition, and so dreadful a noise, produce in those who seriously consider it! For us also this thought is most convenient, whereby to cause in us a contempt of all things temporal. Let us therefore be practically persuaded, that not only this life shall end, but that there shall be also an end of time. Time shall bereave man of this life, and time shall bereave the world of its, whose end shall be no less horrible than that of man; but how much the whole world, and the whole race of mankind, exceed one particular person, by so much shall the universal end surpass in terror the particular end of this life. For this cause the prophecies, which foretold the end of the world, are so dreadful, that if they were not dictated by the Holy Spirit of God, they would be thought incredible. Christ, therefore, our Saviour, having uttered some of them to his disciples, because they seemed to exceed all that could be imagined, in the conclusion, confirmed them with that manner of oath or asseveration, which he commonly used in matters of greatest importance. "Amen (which is, by my verity or verily) I say unto you, that the world shall not end before all these things are fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall fail, but my words shall not fail." Let us believe, then, that time shall end, and that the world shall die, and that, if we may so say, a most horrible and disastrous death; let us believe it, since the angels and the Lord of angels has sworn it. If it be so then, that those memorials of men, which seemed immortal, must at last end, since the whole race of man is to end, let us only strive to be preserved in the eternal memory of him who has no end; and let us no less despise to remain in the fading memory of men who are to die, than to enjoy the pleasures of our senses which are to perish. As the hoarding up of riches upon earth is but a deceit of avarice, so the desire of eternizing our memory is an error of ambition. The covetous man must

then leave his wealth, when he leaves his life; if the thief, in the mean time, do not take it from him; and fame and renown must end with the world, if envy or oblivion deface it not before. All that is to end, is vain; this world, therefore, and all which is esteemed in it, are vain; all is vanity of vanities. Let us only aim and aspire to the eternal, because the just only, as the prophet says, shall remain in the eternal memory of God. The memory of man is (as men themselves) frail and perishing. What man, ambitious of a perpetual memory, would not rather choose to be esteemed by ten men, who were to live a hundred years, than by a thousand who were to die immediately after him? Let us therefore desire to be in the memory of God, whose life is eternity. Our memory amongst men can last no longer than men themselves, who shall all die like us; and there can be no memory immortal, amongst those who are mortal. It is therefore very expedient, that the end of the world should be accompanied by the universal judgment of all men, wherein shall be revealed their most secret and hidden thoughts and actions; that the murderer who had slain his neighbor, lest he should discover his wickedness, may not hope, that therefore it shall remain concealed; and that no man should be bold to sin, for want of witnesses, since the whole world shall then know that; which, if any but himself had known here, would have burst his heart with shame and sorrow.

CHAPTER VII.

How the Elements and the Heavens are to change at the End of Time.

LET US now look upon the strange manner of the end of the world, which being so terrible, gives us to understand the vanity and deceit of all things in it, and the great abuse of them by man; for questionless, were it not for the great malice and wickedness which reigns in the world, the period of it would not be so horrible and disastrous. St. Clement the Roman (Lib. recognit.) writes, that he learned of St. Peter the apostle, that God had appointed a day from all eternity, wherein the army of vengeance should, with all its forces, and, as we may say, in ranged battle, fight with the army of sin; which day is usually called in the holy Scripture, the day of the Lord; in which battle the army of vengeance shall prevail, and shall at once extirpate and make an end both of sin and the world, wherein it has so long reigned. And certainly, if the terror of that day shall equal the multitude and heinousness of sins, we need not wonder at what the sacred Scripture and holy fathers have foretold of it. But as it is usual

in wars to skirmish and make inroads before the day of battle, so, before that dreadful day, wherein all punishments are to encounter with all offences, the Lord shall, from divers parts, send forth several calamities, which shall be forerunners of that great day of battle, and shall, like light horsemen, scour the campaign : which St. John in the Apocalypse signified by those horsemen whom he saw sally forth, upon various colored horses, one red, another black, and the third pale : so the Lord shall, before that day, send plagues, famines, wars, earthquakes, droughts, inundations, deluges ; and if those miseries do now so much afflict us, what shall they then do, when God shall add to them his utmost force and power, when all creatures shall arm against sinners, and the zeal of divine justice shall be their captain-general : which the wise man declares in these words (Sap. v.) : " His zeal shall take up arms, and shall arm the creatures, to revenge him of his enemies ; he shall put on justice as a breast-plate, and righteous judgment as a helmet, and he shall take equity as a buckler, and shall sharpen his wrath as a lance, and the circuit of the earth shall fight for him. Thunderbolts shall be sent from the clouds, as from a well-shooting bow, and shall not fail to hit the mark, and hail shall be sent full of stormy wrath. The waters of the sea shall threaten them, the rivers shall combat furiously, a most strong wind shall rise against them, and shall divide them as a whirlwind." Very dreadful are those words, although they contain but the war, which three of the elements are to make against sinners ; but not only fire, air, and water, but earth also, and heaven (as it appears in other places of Scripture) shall fall upon them, and confound them ; for all creatures shall express their fury in that day, and shall rise against man ; and if the clouds shall discharge thunderbolts and stones upon their heads, the heavens shall shoot no less balls than stars, which, as Christ says, shall fall from thence. If hail no bigger than little stones, falling but from the clouds, destroy the fields, and sometimes kill the lesser sort of cattle, what shall pieces of stars do, falling from the firmament, or some upper region !

It is no amplification which the gospel uses, when it says, that men shall wither with fear of what shall fall upon the whole frame of nature ; for, as in man, who is called the lesser world, when he is to die, the humors, which are as the elements, are troubled and out of order, his eyes, which are as the sun and moon, are darkened, his other senses, which are as the lesser stars, fall away, his reason, which is as the celestial virtues, is off the hinges ; so, in the death of the greater world, before it dissolve and expire, the sun shall be turned into darkness, the moon into blood, the stars shall fall, and the whole world shall tremble with a horrid noise. If the sun, moon, and other celestial bodies, which are held incorruptible, shall suffer such chances, what shall be done with

those frail and corruptible elements of earth, air, and water? If this inferior world do, as the philosophers say, depend upon the heavens, those celestial bodies being altered and broken in pieces, in what state must the lower elements remain, when the virtues of heaven shall falter, and the wandering stars shall lose their way, and fail to observe their order! How shall the air be troubled with violent and sudden whirlwinds, dark tempests, horrible thunders, and furious flashes of lightning! and how shall the earth tremble with dreadful earthquakes, opening herself with a thousand mouths, and casting forth, as it were, whole volcanoes of fire and sulphur, and not content to overthrow the loftiest towers, shall swallow up high mountains, and bury whole cities in her entrails! How shall the sea then rage, mounting its proud waves above the clouds, as if they meant to overwhelm the whole earth, and shall certainly drown a great part of it! The roaring of the ocean shall astonish those who are far distant from the sea, and inhabit in the midst of the firm land; wherefore Christ our Saviour said (Luke xxi.), that there should be in the earth afflictions of nations for the confusion of the noise of the sea.

What shall men do in this general perturbation of nature? They shall remain amazed and pale as death. What comfort shall they have? They shall stand gazing one upon another, and every one shall conceive a new fear, by beholding in his neighbor's face the image of his own death. What fear and horror shall then possess them, when they shall hourly expect the event and dire effects, portended by these monstrous prodigies! All commerce shall then cease; the market-places shall be unpeopled, and the tribunals remain solitary and silent; none shall be then ambitious of honors, none shall seek after pastimes and newly invented pleasures; nor shall the covetous wretch then busy himself with the care of his treasures; none shall frequent the palaces of kings and princes, but through fear shall forget even to eat and drink; all their care shall be employed how to escape those deluges, earthquakes, and lightnings, seeking for places of security, which they shall not meet with. Who will then value his own descent and lineage? who the nobleness of his arms and achievements? who his wisdom and talents? who will remember the beauty he had once doted upon? who the sumptuous buildings he had reared? who his acute and well-composed writings? who his discretion and gravity in his discourse? And if we shall forget what we ourselves most valued and gloried in, how shall we remember that of others? What remembrance shall there then be of the acts of the great Alexander? of the learning of Aristotle, and the endowments of the most renowned men of the world? Their fame shall remain thenceforward for ever buried, and shall die with the world for a whole eternity. The mariners,

when, in some furious tempest, they are upon the point of sinking, how are they amazed at the rage of the watery element! how grieved and afflicted with the ruin that threatens them! what prayers and vows do they send up to heaven! how disinterested are they of all worldly matters, since they fling their wealth and riches into the sea, for which they have run such hazard! In what condition shall be then the inhabitants of the earth, when not only the sea with its raging, but heaven and earth with a thousand prodigies, shall affright them? when the sun shall put on a robe of mourning, and amaze them with the horror of his darkness; when the moon shall look like blood, the stars fall, and the earth shake them with its unquiet trembling; when the whirlwinds shall throw them off their feet, and frequent and thick flashes of lightning dazzle their sight and confound their understanding; what shall sinners then do, for whose sake all these fearful wonders shall happen?

SECTION II.

The fear and astonishment which shall fall upon mankind, when the whole power and concourse of nature shall be armed against sinners, may be perceived by the fear that has been caused by some particular of those changes, which are foretold to happen in the end of the world, all together, and every one in great excess. Let us, therefore, by the consideration of the particular Judge, consider how dreadful shall be the conjunction of so many and so great calamities. And to begin with the earth, the most dull and heavy of all the elements: Cardinal Jacobus Papiensis (Jacob. Papiens. in Epist.), writing what happened in his own time, reports, that in the year 1456, upon the 5th of December, three hours before day, the whole kingdom of Naples trembled with that violence, that some entire towns were buried in the earth, and a great part of many others were overthrown, in which perished sixty thousand persons, part of them swallowed by the earth, and part oppressed by the ruins of buildings. What security can men look for in this present life, when they are not secure of the earth which they tread upon? What firmness can there be in the world, when the only firm thing in it is unstable? From whence may not death assault us, if it springs from under our feet? But it is not much, that the earthquake of a whole kingdom should cause so great a ruin, since it has done as much in one city. Evagrius (Evagr. l. 6. c. 8. vide Niceph. l. 18. c. 13.) writes, that the night in which Mauritius, the emperor, was married, three hours within night, the city of Antioch quaked in that manner, that most of the buildings were overthrown, and sixty thousand persons remained buried in the ruins. If the earth was so cruel in those particular earthquakes, what was it in the time

of Tiberius, when, according to Pliny (Plin. l. 2. c. 84. Sen. nat. q. l. 6.), twelve of the principal cities of Asia were overthrown and sunk into the earth? And yet more cruel was that related by Nicephorus (Niceph. l. 4. c. 46.), which happened in the time of the emperor Theodosius, which lasted for six months without intermission, and was so universal, that almost the whole circuit of the earth trembled, as extending to the Chersonesus, Alexandria, Bythinia, Antioch, the Hellespont, the two Phrygias, the greatest part of the East, and many nations of the West.

And that we may also say something of the fury of the sea, even against those who were far distant from the rage of its waves, and thought themselves secure in their own houses: Most horrible was that earthquake related by St. Jerome (S. Hier. in vita S. Hilarion), and Ammianus Marcellinus, who was an eye-witness of it, which happened not long after the death of the emperor Julian, wherein not only the earth trembled, but the sea outpassed its limits, as in another deluge, and turned again to involve the earth, as in the first chaos. Ships floated in Alexandria above the loftiest buildings, and in other places above high hills; and after the sea was calmed, and returned into its channel, many vessels in that city, as Nicephorus writes (Niceph. l. 10. c. 35.), remained upon the tops of houses, and in other parts, upon high rocks, as witnesseth St. Jerome. But let us hear it related by Ammianus Marcellinus (Ammian. Marcel. l. 20.), whose words are these which follow: "Procopius the tyrant being yet alive, the 21st of July, the year wherein Valentinian was first time consul with his brother, the elements throughout the whole compass of the earth suddenly fell into such distempers and disorders, as neither true stories have ever mentioned, nor false feigned. A little before morning, the heavens being first overcast with a dark tempest, intermixed with frequent thunders and horrid flashes of lightning, the whole body of the earth moved, and the sea being violently driven back, retired in such a manner, as the most hidden bottom of it was discovered; so as many unknown sorts of fishes were seen stretched out on the mud. Those vast profundities beholding then the sun, which nature from the beginning of the world had hid under so immense a mass of waters, many ships remained upon the Oasis, or floating in small gullets; and fishes were taken up with men's hands, gasping upon the dry sands; but in a short time the waves of the sea, enraged to see themselves banished from their natural seats, lifted themselves up with great fury against the islands and far extended coasts of the continent, and what cities or buildings they encountered were violently overthrown and levelled with the ground; insomuch that the face of the world, changed by the furious discord of the elements, produced many unheard-of prodigies. For, the vast body of the waters suddenly and unexpectedly returning, and entering far into the

land, many thousands of people were drowned, whose dead bodies, after the swellings of the waves were assuaged and retired into their natural bed, were found, some with their faces downward, groveling upon the earth, some upwards, looking upon the heavens; and some great ships the waters left upon the tops of houses, as it happened in Alexandria; others far from the sea shore, and as we ourselves are witness, who saw one, as we passed by Methion, then old and worm-eaten." All this lamentable story is from Ammianus Marcellinus.

No less fearful is that which is related by Nauclerus and Trithemius (Naucler. gen. 41. sub. fin. Trith. Chron.), that in the year 1218, the enraged sea entering into Frisia, there were drowned in the fields and in their own houses, more than a hundred thousand persons. Langus adds, that afterwards, in the year 1287, the ocean again reëntering the same province, retired not till it had left eighty thousand persons drowned behind it. This mortality is not much in a whole province in respect of what the sea has done in one only city. SURIUS, in his commentaries of the year 1509, writes, that the day of the exaltation of the Cross, in September, the sea between Constantinople and Pera swelled with that rage and fury, that it passed over the walls of both cities, and that there were drowned only of Turks in Constantinople, above thirteen thousand. To these so certain examples, we shall not need to add what Plato writes, although Tertullian (Tertul. Apolog. cap. 39.) and many authors of these times approve it, that the Atlantic island, which was seated in that spacious ocean, between Spain and the West Indies, and which was a greater part of the world than Asia and Africa, both together, replenished with innumerable people, was, by an earthquake, and the rain of one only day and night, (in which the heavens as it were melted themselves into water, and the sea overpassed its bounds,) buried in the ocean, with all the inhabitants, and never since appeared. But I will not make use of this history to exaggerate the force of the elements, enraged against man. The modern stories, which we have related with more certainty are sufficient, and by that which happened in Frisia, may be seen with what fury the ocean, imprisoned within its proper limits, issues forth, when God permits it to fight against sinners. What shall be, then, when the Lord of all shall arm all the elements against them, and shall give the alarm to all creatures, to revenge him upon men, so ungrateful for his infinite benefits!

The air also, which is an element so sweet and gentle, in which we live, and by which we breathe, when God, slackening the bridle, draws force out of weakness, with no less fury ruins and overthrows all it meets. It has been seen to tear up whole woods by the roots, and transport the trees to places far distant. (Ovid. in Hist. Indic. l. 6. c. 3.) SURIUS (SURIUS in Comm.) writes, that

the 28th of June, in the year 1507, at midnight there arose such a tempest in Germany, that it made the strongest buildings shake, uncovered houses, rooted up trees, and threw them a great distance off. Conradus Argentinas (Conrad. Argen. in Chron.), writes, that Henry the sixth being emperor, he himself saw great beams of timber blown from the roof of the chief church in Mentz, as big as the beams of a wine-press, and that of so heavy wood as oak, flying in the air above a mile's distance. Above all, who is not amazed at what Josephus writes, in his Antiquities, and Eusebius, in *Præpar. Evangel.*, that the tower of Babel, which was the most strong and prodigious building in the world, was by God overthrown with a tempest? What shall I speak of those fearful tempests of hail and lightning, flying through the air from place to place to chastise sinners; one of which slew all the flocks and herds of the Egyptians; and in Palestine, of another hail of a strange greatness, that slew innumerable Amorites? Of latter times, in these parts, in the year 1524, Clavetellus (Clav. fol. 260. Corn. a Lap. in Cap. 9. Exod.) writes, that near Cremona, there fell hail as big as hens' eggs; and in the Campagna of Bologna, in the year 1537, there fell stones of twenty-eight pounds weight. Olaus Magnus (Olåus Mag. l. 1. c. 22. Conimb. in Met. c. de grandine) writes, that in the North, hail has fallen as big as the head of a man; and the Tripartite History (Hist. Tripart. l. 7. c. 22.), that in the year 369, there happened such a tempest in Constantinople, that the hail was as rocks. Certainly, it is not then much what the prophet Ezekiel (ch. xxxviii.) says, that in the end of the world shall fall huge stones; and what St. John (Apoc. xvi.) writes, that they shall be of the weight of a talent, which is one hundred and twenty-five pounds of Roman weight. With what horrible thunder shall that tempest resound, which shall throw a stone of that greatness! In Scythia, they write that divers persons have fallen dead, with the terrible noise of the thunder in those parts. What noise then shall those last tempests make, which God shall send in the end of the world!

All those alterations past of the elements, are no more than skirmishes. What shall then be the battle, which they are to give to sinners, when the heavens shall shoot their arrows, and give the alarm with prodigious thunders, and shall declare their wrath with horrible apparitions. St. Gregory the Great (Greg. lib. 4. dialog. cap. 36.) writes as an eye-witness, that in a great pestilence at Rome, he saw arrows visibly fall from heaven, and strike many men. John the Deacon (Joan. in Vit. Greg. l. 1. c. 37.) says, it rained arrows. How shall it then be, when the heavens and air rain pieces of stars? The world was amazed when, in the time of Irene and Constantine (Zonar. in Iren.), the sun was darkened for seventeen days together, and in the time of Vespasian, (Plin. l. 1. c. 13.) the sun and moon appeared not during the space of

twelve days. What shall it be in the last days, when the sun shall hide his beams under a mourning garment, and the moon shall clothe herself in blood, to signify the wars which all the creatures are to make with fire and blood against those who have despised their Creator? When on one side, the earth shall rouse itself up against them, and shall shake them off her back, as unwilling to endure their burthen any longer? when the sea shall pursue and assault them within their own houses, and the air shall not permit them to be safe in the fields? Certainly, it shall be then no wonder, if they shall desire the mountains to cover them, and the hills to hide them within their caverns. But all this is rather to be imagined than expressed; and the very thought of it is enough to make us tremble. The creatures now groan to see themselves abused by man in contempt of his and their Creator; but they shall then shake off their yokes, and shall revenge themselves of the grievances, which they have suffered under him, and the injuries he has done to the Creator of all. The violences of the elements, and disturbances of nature, which have and may happen hereafter, are nothing in respect of those which shall be in the last days; which St. Augustine says, shall be much more horrible and dreadful than those which are past. And if those single and alone were so terrible (as we have already seen), what shall they be when they come all together, and from all parts; when the whole world shall rebel against man; when all shall be confusion; when summer shall be changed into winter, and winter into summer, and no creature shall keep the prefixed law with those who have not observed the law of their Creator, that so they may revenge both God and themselves?

SECTION III.

But that this most fearful alteration of the creatures which shall happen, may be yet more apparent, we will specify some of them out of the Apocalypse of St. John. Very dreadful is that which he mentions in the eighth chapter, of hail and fire, with a rain of blood, so general, and in such abundance, that it shall destroy the third part of the earth, of trees and green herbs. How horrible an amazement shall so general a rain cause amongst men! But it is not so to end. For immediately shall appear in the air a huge mountain of fire, which shall fall all at once into the sea, and dividing itself into several bodies, shall burn the third part of the fishes, the third part of ships, and of what else shall be in the ocean. The like effect shall proceed from a flame or prodigious comet, which, falling into the rivers and fountains, and there dividing itself into several parts, shall turn the waters bitter as wormwood, and make them so pestilential, that they shall infect those who drink them, and many shall die with their taste. An angel shall then

~~smoke~~ the sun, moon and stars, and deprive them of a third part of ~~their~~ light. But more horrible than all, is that which follows ; that ~~after~~ so many calamities, the bottomless pit, which is hell, shall burst open, and out of his profound throat, belch forth so thick a smoke, as shall wholly darken the sun and air ; from which smoke shall sally forth a multitude of deformed locusts, which in great swarms shall disperse themselves over the face of the whole earth, and leaving the fields, herbs and what is sown, fall upon such men as have been unfaithful to God, and shall for five months torment them, with greater rage than scorpions. Some doctors understand those locusts according to the letter (Lessius de Perf. Div. l. 13. c. 18. Cornel. in Apoc.), that they shall be a certain kind of true locusts, but of a strange figure and fierceness ; others, that they shall be devils of hell, in the shape of locusts ; and it is no marvel, that in the destruction of the world, devils shall appear in visible forms, since in the destruction of Babylon, they appeared in divers figures of beasts, as was prophesied by Isaias. (Ch. xxxiv. and xiii.) But after what manner soever ; St. John says, that this plague shall be so cruel, that men shall seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

Many other plagues shall happen in those last days. For as before God drowned the Egyptians, and delivered his people, he sent such plagues upon Egypt as are recorded in Exodus ; so, before the general destruction of sinners, in that universal deluge, the sea of fire, which shall cover the whole earth, and out of which the saints are to escape free, so much greater plagues shall proceed, as the whole world is greater than Egypt. For not only the rivers and fountains shall then be turned into blood, but the whole sea shall be converted into a most black gore. The Lord shall also, in those days, send horrible blotches and sores upon men ; and the sun shall scorch them in that manner, that they shall lose their senses, and some of the wicked shall turn against God, and blaspheme, as if they were already in hell. The earth also shall tremble ; and that not being the greatest, which is recounted in the sixth chapter of the Apocalypse, yet the apostle relates such things of it, as are able to strike a fear and amazement in those who hear it. His words are these : " There was a great earthquake, and the sun became as sackcloth, and the moon as blood, the stars fell from heaven, as a fig-tree casts off its green figs when it is shaken by a violent wind. The heavens were folded up as a book, or as a roll of parchment ; and all mountains and islands moved from their places." I leave to the consideration of every one, what shall then become of those who will remain alive in that conflict. St. John says, that kings and princes, the rich and strong, slaves and freemen, shall hide themselves in caves and rocks, and shall say to the mountains and hills, " Fall upon us and cover us." And the same St. John says further, that there shall be

yet a greater earthquake, which shall be the greatest that ever happened since the foundation of the world was laid, in which the islands shall sink, and the mountains shall be made even with the plains. Horrible lightnings and thunders shall affright the inhabitants of the earth, and hail-stones shall fall of the weight of a talent, which is five arrobas, a Hebrew talent weighing one hundred and twenty-five Roman pounds. This plague joined with so strange an earthquake, how shall it astonish those who will be then alive !

SECTION IV.

But how shall it then fare with sinners, when after all shall come that general fire, so often foretold in the holy Scripture, which shall either fall from heaven, or ascend out of hell, or according to Albertus Magnus (*Vide P. Grana. de noviss. Alb. Mag. in comp. Theolog.*), proceed from both, and shall devour and consume all it meets with? Whither shall the miserable flee, when that river of flames, or to say better, that inundation and deluge of fire, shall so encompass them as no place of surety shall be left, where nothing can avail but a holy life, when all besides shall perish in that universal ruin of the whole world? What shall it then profit the worldlings to have rich vessels of gold and silver, curious embroideries, precious tapestries, pleasant gardens, sumptuous palaces, and all that the world now esteems, when they shall, with their own eyes, behold their costly movables burned, their rich and curious pieces of gold melted, and their flourishing and pleasant orchards consumed, without power either to preserve them or themselves? All shall burn, and with it the world, and all the fame and memory of it shall die; and that which mortals thought to be immortal, shall then end and perish. No more shall Aristotle be cited in the schools, nor Ulpian alleged in the tribunals; no more shall Plato be read amongst the learned, nor Cicero imitated by the orators; no more shall Seneca be admired by the understanding, nor Alexander extolled amongst captains; all fame shall then die, and all memory be forgotten. O vanity of men, whose memorials are as vain as themselves; which in a few years perish, and those which last longest, can endure no longer than the world! What became of that statue of massy gold, which Gorgias Leontinus placed in Delphos, to eternize his name; and that of Gabrion in Rome; and that of Berosus, with the golden tongue, in Athens, and innumerable others erected to great captains in brass, or hardest marble? Certainly, many years since they are perished, or, if not yet, they shall perish in this great and general conflagration. Only virtue no fire can burn.

Three hundred and sixty statues were erected by the Athenians, to Demetrius Phalareus, for having governed their commonwealth

ten years with great virtue and prudence ; but of so little continuance were these trophies, that those very emblems, which were raised by gratitude, were soon after destroyed by envy ; and he himself, who saw his statues set up in so great a number, saw them also pulled down : but he still retained this comfort, which Christians may learn from him, that beholding how they threw his images to the ground, he could say at least, " They cannot overthrow those virtues, for which they were erected." If they were true virtues, he said well ; for those neither envy can demolish, nor human power destroy ; and, what is more, the Divine Power will not, in this general destruction of the world, consume them, but will preserve, in his eternal memory, as many as shall persevere in goodness, and die in his holy grace ; for only charity and Christian virtues shall not end, when the world ends. The sight of those triumphs exhibited by Roman generals, when they conquered some mighty and powerful kings, lasted but a while, and the memory of the triumphers not much longer ; and now there are few who know, that Metellus triumphed over king Jugurtha, Aquilius over king Aristonicus, Atilius over king Antiochus, Marcus Antonius over the king of Armenia, Pompey over king Mithridates, Aristobulus and Hiarbas Emilius over king Perseus, and the emperor Aurelius over Zenobia, queen of the Palmyreans. If few know this, but dumb books and dead paper, when those shall end, what shall then become of their memories ? How many histories has fire consumed, and are now no more known, than if they had never been written ? Neither to do nor write, can make the memory of man immortal. Aristarchus wrote more than a thousand commentaries, on several subjects, of which not one line remains at present. Chrysippus wrote seven hundred volumes, and now not one leaf is extant. Theophrastus wrote three hundred, and scarce three or four remain. Above all, is that which is reported of Dionysius Grammaticus, that he wrote three thousand five hundred works, and now not one sheet appears. But yet more is that which Jamblicus testifies of the great Trismegistus, that he composed thirty-six thousand five hundred and twenty-five books, and all those are as if he had not written a letter ; for four or five little and imperfect treatises, which pass under his name, are none of his. Time, even before the end of time, leaves no books nor libraries. By the assistance of Demetrius Phalareus, king Ptolemy collected a great library in Alexandria, in which were stored all the books he could gather from Chaldea, Greece and Egypt, which amounted to seventy thousand volumes ; but, in the civil wars of the Romans, it perished by that burning, which was caused by Julius Cæsar. Another famous library amongst the Greeks, of Policrates and Pisistratus, was spoiled by Xerxes. The library of Byzantium, which contained a hundred and twenty thousand books, was burned in the time

of Basiliscus. That of the Roman capitol was, in the time of Commodus, turned into ashes by lightning; and what have we now of the great library of Pergamus, wherein were two hundred thousand books? Even before the end of the world, the most constant things of the world die. And what great matter is it, if those memorials in paper be burned, since those in brass melt, and those of marble perish? That prodigious amphitheatre, which Stabilius Taurus (Vide Lips. in Amph.), raised of stone, was burned in the time of Nero; the hard marble not being able to defend itself from the soft flames. The great riches of Corinth in gold and silver were melted when the town was fired; those precious metals could neither with their hardness resist, nor with their value hire a friend to defend them from those furious flames. If this particular burning, in the most flourishing time of the world, caused so great a ruin, what shall that general one, which shall make an end of the world, and all things with it?

SECTION V.

Let us now consider, (as we have already in earthquakes and deluges,) what great astonishment and destruction has sometimes happened by some particular burnings; that by them we may conceive the greatness of the horror and ruin which will accompany that general one of the whole world. What lamentations were in Rome, when it burned for seven days together! What shrieks were heard in Troy, when it was wholly consumed with flames! What howling and astonishment in Pentapolis, when those cities were destroyed with fire from heaven! Some say they were ten cities, Strabo thirteen, Josephus and Lyra five; that which is of faith is, that there were four at least, which, with all their inhabitants, were consumed. What weeping was there in Jerusalem, when they beheld the house of God, the glory of their kingdom, the wonder of the world, involved in fire and smoke! And that we may draw nearer to our own times, when lightning from heaven fell upon Stockholm, the capital city of Sweden, and burned to death above sixteen hundred persons, besides an immense number of women and children, who, hoping to escape the fire on land, fled into the ships at sea, but, overcharging them, were all drowned; imagine what that people felt, when they saw their houses and goods on fire, and no possibility of saving them; when the husband heard the shrieks and cries of his dying wife, the father of his little children, and unawares perceived himself so encompassed with flames, that he could neither relieve them nor free himself. (Albert. Krant. Suec. l. 5. c. 3.) What grief, what anguish possessed the hearts of those unfortunate creatures, when, to avoid the fury of the fire, they were forced to trust themselves to the no less cruel waves, when by

their own overhasty crowdings and indiscretion, they saw their ships overwhelmed, and themselves compelled to escape the burning of their country, to struggle with the water, and that which way soever they turned, they perceived death still to follow them, and were certain to perish! What shall be then the straights and exigencies of that general burning, when those who shall escape earthquakes, inundations of the sea, the fury of whirlwinds, and lightning from heaven, shall fall into that universal fire, that deluge of flames, which shall consume all, and make an end both of men and their memories! Of those who lived before the flood, and were masters of the world for so long a time, except it be of some few, whom the Scriptures mention, we know nothing. Those heroical actions, which certainly some of them performed, and gained by them incomparable fame, lie buried in the waters, and there remains no more memory of those who did them, than if they had never been born. No more permanent shall be the fame of those, who now resound in the ears of the whole world; Cyrus, Alexander, Hannibal, Scipio, Cæsar, Augustus, Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Euclid, and the rest: no more world, no more fame. This fire shall end all that smoke.

Nor is the world without convenient proportion to end in fire, which is now so full of smoke. There are few comparisons (as has been said in the beginning of this work) which express better what the world is, than that which St. Clement the Roman learned of St. Peter the apostle, who said the world was like a house full of smoke, which in such manner blinds the eyes, that it suffers not those within it to see things as they are; and thus the world, with its deceits, so disguises the nature of human things, that we perceive not what they are. Ambition and human honor (which the world so much dotes upon) are no more than smoke without substance, which so blinds our understanding, that we know not the truth of that we so much covet. It is no marvel, that so much smoke comes at last to end in flames. The smoke of the mountains Vesuvius and Ætna, when it ends in fire, and bursts forth into those innumerable flames, has amazed the world, and rivers of fire have been seen to issue from their bowels. Vesuvius is near Naples, and the fire has sometimes sallied forth with that impetuous violence, that, as grave authors affirm, the ashes have been seen in Constantinople and Alexandria. (Zon. in Tito. Proc. l. 2.) And as St. Augustine writes (S. Aug. l. 3. de Civit. c. 31.), the ashes of mount Ætna overwhelmed the city of Catania; and in our time, when Vesuvius burst out, the very flame of it terrified places far distant and secure. And now lately, in the year 1638, the 3d of July, near the island of St. Michael, one of the Terceras, the fire bursting out from the bottom of the sea one hundred and fifty fathoms deep, and overcoming the weight of so huge a mass of water, sent up his flames

to the clouds, and made many places (although far distant) tremble. With what fury then shall the general conflagration of the world burst forth! That part which shall issue forth from hell, and from beneath the earth, shall fill the world with ashes before it be involved in flames; and when a clap of thunder, or a flash of lightning amazes us so much, that fire which falls from heaven, what violence and noise shall it bring along with it! Lot, the nephew of Abraham, being secure in conscience, and promised by the angel of God, that for his sake the city of Segor should not be burned, but that he might rest safe in it, was, notwithstanding, so affrighted with the fire which fell upon other cities, in that valley of Pentapolis, that notwithstanding he saw it not, yet he held himself not safe, but retired to the mountains. What counsel shall sinners take in that extremity, when their own conscience shall be their accusers, and when they shall behold the world all on fire about them? Whither shall they flee for safety, when no place will afford it? Shall they climb to the mountains? thither the flames will follow them. Shall they descend into the valleys? thither the fire will pursue them. Shall they shut themselves up in strong castles and towns? but there the wrath of God will assault them, and that fire will pass their fosses, consume the bulwarks, and make an end both of them and their fortunes.

Besides the contempt of all things, which the world esteems, which we may draw from this general destruction of it by fire, we may also perceive the abomination of sin; since God, to purify the world from that uncleanness, wherewith our offences have polluted it, is resolved to cleanse it with fire, as he anciently washed it with the waters of the deluge. Such are our sins, that for being only committed in the world, the world itself is condemned to die; what shall then become of those who sinned? (Less. de Perf. Div. l. 13. c. 10.) But from this so terrible a fire, the saints then alive shall be free, that it may appear, it was only prepared for sinners, and that nothing can then avail but virtue and holiness. The rich man shall not be delivered by his wealth, nor the mighty by his power, nor the crafty by his wiles; only the just shall be freed by his virtues; none shall escape the terror of that day by fast-sailing ships, or speed of horses; the sea itself shall burn, and the fire shall overtake the swiftest post; only holiness and charity shall defend the servants of Christ, to whom the tribulations of those times shall serve to purify their souls, by suffering that in this life with reward, which they should otherwise have done for a time in the other without it. Albertus Magnus observes the convenience of the two elements by which God resolved twice to destroy the world: The first by water against the first of the flesh and heat of concupiscence, which so inordinately tyrannized over all virtue before the general flood. The second he has appointed to be by fire, against the coldness

of charity, which in those last days shall reign in the aged and decrepit world. And as in the deluge of waters, only the chaste Noah and his wife, who were most continent in matrimony, and his sons and daughters, who observed chastity all the time they continued in the Ark, escaped drowning; so in that general fire of the world, only the just, who shall be replenished with charity, shall be free from burning. The deluge of waters overwhelmed not him, who was not burned with the heat of carnal love; neither shall the deluge of fire destroy those who are inflamed with divine charity.

CHAPTER VIII.

How the World ought to conclude with so dreadful an End, in which a general Judgment is to pass of all that is in it.

To be subject to an end (as has been said) were sufficient to breed in us a contempt of all things temporal; for what is to conclude in a not being, is already not much distant from it, and so differing little from nothing, ought not to be valued much more, than if it were nothing. But to this necessity of ending, is annexed that so notable circumstance of ending, after so dreadful and terrible a manner, as we have already seen. I have, therefore, been so full in expressing of it, that we may perceive by this so strange a manner of conclusion, what our exorbitant malice in the abuse of the creatures, has added to their proper vanity; for it is we who by our vice have made them of much less value, than they are by their own nature; so as in the condition they now stand, they are much to be despised. Natural delights are in themselves more pure, and less hurtful, than human malice has made them, which has rendered them more costly, dangerous and difficult, and therefore less pleasant; for what is subject to care and danger, must of necessity be mixed with trouble. Honey loses its sweetness if mixed with gall, and the most generous wine is corrupted with a little vinegar; by which may appear the error of our appetites, which striving to augment our pleasures, has lessened them, and by adding inordinate relishes to what nature had simply and regularly provided, has rather invented new afflictions than contents. Our gluttony is not pleased with savory food, but what we eat must be rare and costly; it contents not itself with the bare taste of meat, which is its proper object, but seeks after smell and color; it is not cooked, if not disguised, neither will that serve, if not accommodated with several sorts of spices. Salt and sugar season not what we eat, but musk and amber. Neither is our feeling content with the warmth of our apparel, but looks after color, fashion and expense;

and we are more solicitous, that it may appear neat and curious to others, than that it may decently cover and cherish our necessitated members; taking occasion, by the necessity of nature, to nourish our vices, apparel serving rather the ambition and pride of our minds, than the nakedness of our bodies.

But it is not much, that we content not ourselves with the natural use of things, since we are not pleased with nature itself, but adulterate it with art: not only women, but men dye their hair, and counterfeit their faces and statures, and the creature, to the injury of the Creator, presumes to form himself after another manner, than God thought fit to make him. In like manner, riches are not measured out for human necessity and convenience, but for pomp and arrogance; in the acquisition and use whereof, we look not so much what suffices for life, and the lawful pleasures of it, as what serves for pride and ostentation, wherein consuming our wealth and fortunes, we lose the use of them, and what was only ordained as a remedy of our necessities, by our abuse augment and make them greater. Whereupon it commonly happens, that rich men are most in want, and great personages are more indebted and engaged, than meaner people. Honor and fame are so adulterated, that they are not only desired as a reward of virtues, but of vices. All these abuses are the faults of the world, which has made human life more troublesome and full of danger, than its necessity and condition; and therefore it was convenient, that the world should end with trouble and confusion, since the abuse of it has been with so much shame and impudence; and that itself also should be judged which has sustained and fed the vanity and folly of man, with things so base and despicable. The ancient philosophers placed virtue, and the felicity of man, in living according to nature; but what content and happiness can there be, when all the pleasures of life are so sophisticated with art, as they are wholly different from that which nature requires? and what virtue can be expected from those, who live according to so much malice? But Christians, who ought not only to live conformable to nature, but to grace and the example of Christ, make it apparent how just it is, that the wicked should give an account of those things, which they have used so contrary to his divine pleasure.

SECTION II.

And so, not only those things, which are spoken of in the preceding chapter, are to be of terror and fear in the end of the world, but more especially that strict account, which God shall then exact from the whole lineage of man. For as in the death of particular persons, there is to be a particular judgment, so in the death of the world, a general judgment is to pass upon all; and

as the most terrible thing of death is that particular reckoning, so in the end of the world is that universal reckoning, when God shall demand an account of his divine benefits, and shall judge the abuses of them, and all the sins of men; making it to appear to the whole world, how good and gracious he has been towards them, and how rebellious and ungrateful they have been towards him. The manifestation of which truth will be of more terror to the wicked, than all the plagues and prodigies of earthquakes, inundations, tempests, locusts, pestilences, famines, wars, lightnings and fire, which have gone before. Therefore Guigo Carthusianus (Guigo Carth. in med.) said well, that the most terrible thing of that day was the truth, that should then appear against sinners. And without doubt, neither those stupendous thunders, nor that furious roaring of the sea, nor any other wonder of those last times, shall bring that confusion upon sinners, as to see the great reason which God has to be served, and the none at all which they then had to displease him. It was therefore most convenient, that after the particular judgment of each man apart, there should be a universal judgment of all together, in which God should make appear the righteousness of his proceedings, and give a general satisfaction of his justice, even to the damned and devils. And because in the death of man, as St. Thomas (3. p. 2. d. 99. art. 5.) notes, all that was his, dies not, for there remain his memory, his children, his works, his example, his body, and many of those things in which he placed his affection: it is therefore reasonable, that all those should enter into that general judgment with him, that he may know that he is not only to give an account of his life, but of those things also which he leaves behind him. The fame and memory of man after death does not oftentimes correspond to the deserts of his life, and it is just, that this deceit should be taken off, and that the virtuous, whom the world made no account of, should then be acknowledged for such, and he, who had fame and glory without merit, should then change it into shame and confusion.

O how deceived shall the ambitious then find themselves, who, to the end they might leave a name behind them, neither observed justice with others, nor virtue in themselves; how shall they change their glory into ignominy! Let us, by the way, look upon some of them, who have filled the world with their vain fame, who shall in that day by so much suffer the greater disgrace, by how much the world has bestowed more undeserved honors upon them. Who more glorious than Alexander the Great, and Julius Cæsar, whom the world has ever esteemed, as the greatest and most valorous captains that it ever produced, and their glory still continues fresh after so many ages past? What was all they did, but acts of rapine, without right or title,

unjustly tyrannizing over what was none of theirs, and shedding much innocent blood, to make themselves lords of the earth? All these actions were vicious, and therefore unworthy of honor, fame or memory; and since they have, for so many hundreds of years, remained in the applause and admiration of men, there shall in that day fall upon them so much ignominy, shame and confusion, as shall recompense that past honor, which they have unworthily received and viciously desired. This ambition was so exorbitant in Alexander, that hearing Anaxartes the philosopher affirm, that there were many worlds, he sighed with great resentment, and cried out, "Miserable man, that am not yet lord of one!" This devilish and vain pride was extolled by many for greatness of spirit, but was in truth the height of vanity and arrogant ambition, which could not be contained in one world, but with one desire, tyrannized over many, and shall then be punished with the public ignominy of all men, not only in respect of the fame which he has so unjustly enjoyed, but of the ill example which he has given to others, and principally to Cæsar, who, as he followed his example in tyranny, did likewise imitate him in ambition, and the desire of rule and vain honor; and therefore beholding his statue in Cadiz, at such time as he was questor in Spain, complained of his own fortune, that at the age wherein Alexander had subjugated all Asia, he had yet done nothing of importance; counting it for a matter of importance, to tyrannize over the world, and to the end he might make himself lord of it, to captivate his country. (De Alex. vide Val. Max. l. 8. De Julio Cæs. vid. Fulg. l. 8.) In like manner, Aristotle, so celebrated for his writings, in which he consumed many sleepless nights only to purchase glory, and to make it greater in his confuting of other philosophers, used little ingenuousness, taking their words in a far different sense than they meant or spoke them. This labor of his, since it proceeded not from virtue, but was performed with so little candor and sincerity, merely to obtain a vain reputation, deserved no glory; and therefore a confusion, equal to the honor they unduly now give him, shall then fall upon him. And since he put his disciple Theodectus to so much shame, his own ambition will be to him occasion of greater confusion. Aristotle gave to this his disciple Theodectus, certain books of the art of oratory, to the end he should divulge them; but afterwards resenting much, that another should carry all the praise, he owned the said books publicly. And for this reason, in other books which he wrote, he cites himself, saying, "As he had said in the books of Theodectus." Wherein is clearly seen Aristotle's ambition, or desire of glory, and therefore was unworthy of it, and with just ignominy shall pay the unjust glory he now possesses. Insomuch, then, as not only fame and memory are vain, in regard they are to end and finish, as all things with the

world are, but also because their undeserved and pretended glory is then to be satisfied with equal shame and confusion, the affront they shall receive in that one day being equivalent to the fame and honor of thousands of years. Neither can the most famous men amongst the gentiles be admired by so many in ten ages, as shall then scorn and condemn them. How many are ignorant that there ever was an Alexander? and how many in all their lives never heard of Aristotle? and yet shall in that day know them, not for their honor, but confusion. The name of the great and admired Alexander is unknown to more nations than known. The Japonians, Chinese, Cafres, Angolans, other people, and most extended and spacious kingdoms, never heard who he was, and shall then know him only for a public thief, a robber, an oppressor of the world, and for a great and an ambitious drunkard.

The same, which is to pass in fame and memory, is also to pass in children, in whom, as St. Thomas (St. Thom. *supra*) says, the fathers live: and as from many good parents spring evil children, so contrariwise, from evil parents come those that are good, who shall be in that day a confusion to those who begot them, and by so much the greater, by how much worse was the example which they gave them. Neither shall the Judge only inquire into the example they have given their children, but also to strangers, and principally the works which they have left behind them. And therefore, as from the deceit of Arius (says the angelical doctor) and other heretics, have, and shall spring divers errors and heresies, until the end of the world; so it is fit, that in that last day of time should appear the evil, which has been occasioned by them, that we may in this life not only take a care for ourselves, but others; so as it is a terrible thing (as Cajetan notes upon that article before mentioned of the angelical doctor), that the divine judgment shall extend even to those things which are by accident, which is, as the divines speak, to those which are beside our will and intention.

St. Thomas also informs us, that by reason of the body, which remains after death, it was convenient that the sentence of each one in particular should be again repeated in the general judgment of the whole world; because many bodies of just men are now buried in the entrails of wild beasts, or otherwise remain without interment; and on the contrary, great sinners have had sumptuous burials and magnificent sepulchres, all which are to be recompensed in that day of the Lord; and the sinner, whose body reposed in a rich mausoleum, shall then see himself not only without ornaments and beauty, but tormented with intolerable pains; and the just, who died, and had no sepulchres, but were devoured by ravenous birds, shall appear with the brightness of the heavens, and with a body glorious as the sun. Let those consider this, who consume vast sums in preparing for themselves

stately sepulchres and beautiful urns, engraving their names, actions and dignities in rich marbles; and let them know, that all this, if they shall be damned, shall serve them in that day but for their greater shame and reproach. Out of this life we can carry nothing but our good works, and let us not add to our evil ones that of vain-glory, in seeking to leave behind us a vain fame and renown. What remains to king Porsenna (Plin. l. 56. c. 13.), of that heavy burden, wherewith he grieved and afflicted his whole kingdom, in rearing him a sepulchre of that rare and sumptuous workmanship, but a testimony of his pride and folly? In like manner, the monument of the emperor Adrian, which was the beauty and glory of Rome, shall then be changed into a scorn. Lastly, St. Thomas teaches us, that temporal things, on which we place our affections, because some last a longer, and some a shorter time, after death shall all enter with us into divine judgment. Let us take heed, therefore, whereon we set our hearts, since the accomplishing of what we wish, may be a punishment of our desires. Those things of the earth, which we most love and desire, shall continue; if they be taken from us, it is a chastisement of our earthly affection; and if we be permitted to enjoy them, let us fear that they be not the temporal reward of some good work, which may either diminish or deprive us of the eternal. Besides this, because not only the soul of man has offended, but the whole man, both in soul and body, it was fit, that both soul and body should be judged, and appear before the tribunal of Christ, and that in public, because none shall presume to sin in secret, since his sins are to be revealed and made known to all, past, present and to come. A terrible case it is, that this passage of divine judgment, which (as we have said out of holy Job), appears to the saints more terrible than to suffer all the pains of hell, is twice to be acted, and this so bitter trance to be again repeated the second time, being to sinners of greater horror and confusion than the first.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the Last Day of Time.

THAT we may now come to handle the matter of this universal judgment, which is to pass upon time and men, we are to suppose, that this fire, which is to precede the coming of Christ, is, at his descent, to continue in assistance of his divine justice, and after his return to heaven, attended by all the just, to remain until it has purified these inferior elements; which is noted by Albertus Magnus (Albert. Mag. in Comp. Theol. l. 7. c. 15. Less. de Per. Div. l. 13. c. 23. et 3.), and collected from various

places of the divine Scriptures. We are also to suppose, that this coming of Christ is to be with greater terror and majesty, than has been yet manifested by any of the divine Persons, either in himself or any of his creatures. If an angel who represented God, and was only to promulgate the law, came with that terror and majesty to mount Sinai, as made the Hebrew people, though purified and prepared for his coming, to quake and tremble; what shall the Lord of the law do, when he himself comes to take an account of the law, and to revenge the breach of it? With what terror and majesty shall he appear to men plunged in sin, and unprepared for his reception, who are then to be all present, and judged in that last day of time!

The day in which the law was given was very memorable to the Hebrews; and this day, where an account of the law is to be given, will be horrible, and ought perpetually to remain in the memory of all mankind. But before we declare what shall pass in this, let us say something of what has already passed in that; that from the horror of the first appearance, we may gather something of what shall happen in the second, and from the majesty wherewith an angel appeared when he gave the law, collect something of the majesty of the Lord of angels, when he judges the law. Fifty days after the departure of the sons of Israel out of Egypt, after so many plagues and punishments poured upon that kingdom, after the burying of the unbelieving Egyptians, who pursued them, in the bottom of the Red sea, and that the Hebrews, having escaped their enemies, were lodged round about mount Sinai (Deut. xxxiii. Vide Barrad. l. 6. Itin. c. 5. Psalm lxxv.), there was seen to come in the air from afar, that is, from mount Seir in Idumea, a lord of great power, attended with an infinite multitude of angels; insomuch that David sings, that ten thousand compassed about his chariot. And Moses, speaking of many thousands which attended him, says also, that he carried in his right hand the law of God all of flaming fire; and yet he who came in this height of majesty, waited on with those celestial spirits, was not God, but, as we learn from St. Stephen (Acts vii.), only an angel, and believed to be St. Michael, who because he came in the name of God, the holy Scripture calls the Lord. This angel, thus accompanied, came seated on a dark, condensed cloud, which cast forth frequent flashes of lightning, and resounded with dreadful claps of thunder, from mount Seir to mount Haran in the land of the Ishmaelites, and from thence with the same majesty, passed through the air to mount Sinai, where the children of Israel lay encamped; who at the dawning of the day, astonished with that fearful noise, stood quaking and trembling in their tents. No sooner was the angel arrived to mount Sinai, which, as the apostle says (Heb. xii.), was covered with rain, whirlwinds, storms and tempests, but he descended in

flames, which wrought between heaven and earth, from whence issued forth a smoke, black and thick, as from a furnace ; during which time a trumpet was heard to sound with that piercing vehemence, that as it increased in loudness, so fear increased in the amazed Israelites, who now stood quaking at the foot of the mountain, but were by the angel (so much would he be respected) commanded by the mouth of Moses not to approach it, lest they died. After which the angel began with a dreadful voice to proclaim the law ; which was pronounced with so much life and vigor, that notwithstanding the horrid noise of thunder, the flashes of lightning, and the shrill and penetrating sound of the trumpet still continued, yet all the Hebrews, who with their tents overspread those vast deserts, and many thousands of Egyptians, who were converted and followed them, heard, conceived, and understood it clearly and distinctly : nay, so piercing was the voice, that it entered and imprinted itself in their very bowels, speaking to every one of them, as if it had spoken to him only, which caused so great a fear and reverence in the people, that they thought they could not live, if the angel continued speaking ; and therefore besought it as a grace, that he would speak to them by Moses, lest they should die. Nay, Moses himself, accustomed to see and work stupendous wonders, and being of a great and generous spirit, confessed his fear, saying, as we have it from St. Paul (Heb. xii.), " that he was terrified and trembled."

Let a man now consider, how memorable was that day to the Hebrew nation, wherein they saw such visions, heard such thunders, and felt such earthquakes, as it is no wonder that the great fear which fell upon them in that day of prodigies, made them think they could not live. Yet was all this nothing in respect of the terror of that great day wherein the Lord of angels is to demand an account of the violation of the law. For after sending far greater plagues than those of Egypt, after burning in that deluge of fire the sinners of the world, the saints remaining still alive, that that article of our faith may be literally fulfilled, " From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead," the heavens shall open, and over the valley of Josaphat, the Redeemer of the world, attended by all the angels of heaven, in visible forms of admirable splendor, shall with a divine majesty descend to judge it. Before the judge shall be borne his standard, which St. Chrysostom (Chrysost. tom. 3. Serm. de Cruce) and divers other doctors affirm, shall be the very cross on which he suffered. Then shall the just (such being the force and vigor of their spirits, as will elevate their terrene and heavy bodies) meet, as the apostle says, their Redeemer in the air, who, at his issuing from the heavens, shall, with a voice audible to all the world, pronounce this his commandment : " Arise, ye dead, and come unto judgment : " which shall be proclaimed by four angels in the

four quarters of the world, with such vehemence, that the sound shall pierce to the infernal region, from whence the souls of the damned shall issue forth, and re-enter their bodies, which shall, from thenceforward, suffer the terrible torments of hell. The souls also of those who died only in original sin, shall come and possess again their bodies, free from pain or torment; and the souls of the blessed, filling their bodies with the four gifts of glory, shall make them more resplendent than the sun, and with the gift of agility shall join themselves with those just, who remain alive in the air in their passible bodies, which being yet mortal, and therefore not able to endure those vehement affections of the heart, of joy, desire, reverence, love and admiration of Christ, shall then die, and in that instant behold the divine Essence: after which their souls shall be again immediately united to their bodies, before they can be corrupted, or so much as fall to the ground, and thenceforward continue glorious: for in the moment wherein they die, they shall be purified from those noxious humors and qualities, wherewith our bodies are now infected. And therefore it was convenient they should first die, that being so cleansed from all filth, they might, by the restitution of their blessed souls, receive the gifts of glory. Considering then the so different conditions of the souls of men, who can express the joy of those happy souls, when they shall take possession of their own glorious and beautiful bodies, which were long since eaten by worms or wild beasts, some four, some five thousand years ago, turned into dust and ashes? What thanks shall they give to God, who, after so long a separation, has restored them to their ancient companions! What gratulations shall the souls of those who lived in austerity and penance, give to their own bodies for the mortifications and rigors which they have suffered, for the hair-shirts, disciplines and fasts, which they have observed! On the contrary, the souls of the damned, how shall they rage, and curse their own flesh, since to please and pamper it has been the occasion of their torments and eternal unhappiness! Which miserable wretches wanting the gift of agility, and so not able of themselves to go to the place of justice, shall be hurried against their wills by devils, all trembling and full of fear.

SECTION II.

The reprobates being then in the valley of Josaphat, and the predestinate in the air, the Judge shall appear above mount Olivet, to whom the clouds shall serve as a chariot, and his most glorious body shall cast forth rays of such incomparable splendor, as the sun shall appear but as a coal; for even the predestinate shall shine in the sun, but the light and brightness of Christ shall

as far exceed them, as the sun does the least star. Which most admirable sight shall be yet more glorious, by those thousand millions of excellent and heavenly spirits which shall attend him, who having formed themselves as real bodies, of more or less splendor, according to their hierarchy and order, shall fill the whole space between heaven and earth with unspeakable beauty and variety. The Saviour of the world shall sit upon a throne of great majesty, made of a clear and beautiful cloud, his countenance shall be most mild and peaceable towards the good, and, though the same, most terrible to the bad. In like manner, out of his sacred wounds shall issue beams of light towards the just, full of love and sweetness, but to sinners full of fire and wrath, who shall weep bitterly for the evils which issue from them. (Ps. cix. 1 Cor. xv. Phil. ii.) So great shall be the majesty of Christ, that the miserable damned, and the devils themselves, notwithstanding all the hate they bear him, shall yet prostrate themselves and adore him, and to their greater confusion acknowledge him for their Lord and God; and those who have most blasphemed and outraged him, shall then bow before him, fulfilling the promises of the eternal Father, that all things should be subject to him, that he would make his enemies his footstool, and that all knees should bend before him. Here shall the Jews, to their greater confusion, behold him whom they have crucified; and here shall the evil Christians see him, whom they have again crucified with their sins; here also shall the sinners behold him in glory, whom they have despised for the base trifles of the earth. What an amazement will it be to see him King of so great majesty, who suffered so much ignominy upon the cross, and even from those whom he redeemed with his most precious blood! What will they then say, who in scorn crowned the sacred temples of the Lord with thorns, put a reed in his hand for a sceptre, clothed him in some old and broken garment of purple, buffeted and spit upon his blessed face? And what will they then say, to whose consciences Christ has so often proposed himself in all his bitter passion and painful death, and has wrought nothing upon them, but a continuance of greater sins, valuing his precious blood, shed for their salvation, no more than if it were the blood of a tiger, or their greatest enemy? I know not how the memory of this does not burst our hearts with compunction. Let us take the counsel of a holy father in the desert (In vit. PP.), who when one asked him, what he should do to soften and mollify his stony heart, answered, that he should remember he was to appear before the Lord who was to judge him, whose sight, as another holy monk said, would be so terrible to the wicked, that if it were possible that souls could die, the whole world, at the coming of the Son of God, would be struck dead with fear and terror.

At the side of the throne of Christ shall be placed another

throne of great glory for his most holy Mother, not then to intercede for sinners, but for the great confusion of those who, when time served, have not addressed themselves to her, nor reaped the benefit of her protection; that she may be honored in the sight of the whole world. There shall be also other thrones for the apostles, and those saints, who, poor in spirit, have left all for Christ; who sitting now as judges with their Redeemer, and condemning, by their good example, the scandalous lives of sinners, shall approve the sentence of the supreme Judge, and declare his great justice before the world, with which the wicked shall remain confounded and amazed: and it shall then be fulfilled, which so many years since was prophesied by the wise man (Sap. v.): "The wicked beholding the just, who were despised in this life, to be so much honored, shall be troubled with horrible fear, and shall wonder at their unexpected salvation, saying amongst themselves with great resentment, and much grief and anguish of spirit: 'These are they, who sometimes were to us matter of scorn and laughter. We fools imagined their life to be madness, and that their end would be without honor; but behold they are counted amongst the children of God, and their lot is amongst the saints. We erred and wandered from the ways of truth, and the light of justice was not with us, nor did the sun of justice shine upon us. We wearied ourselves in the ways of wickedness and perdition, and walked in paths of difficulty, and knew not the way of the Lord. What has our pride profited us? and what has the pomp of our riches availed us? All those things have passed like a shadow, or like a messenger who passes in haste, or like a ship which cuts the unstable waves and leaves no track where it went, and we are now consumed in our wickedness.'" The tyrants who have afflicted and put to death the holy martyrs, what will they now say, when they shall see them in this glory? Those who trampled under foot the justice and right of the poor of Christ, what will they do, when they shall behold them their judges? And what will the wicked judges do or say, when they shall see themselves condemned for their unjust sentences? fulfilling that which was said by Solomon (Eccl. iii. and x.): "I saw a great evil beneath the sun, that in the throne of judgment was seated impiety and wickedness, in the place of justice: and I said in my heart, God shall judge the good and evil, and then shall be seen who every one is." Here in this life the just and sinner have not always the place which they deserve: many times the wicked take the right hand, and the holy the left. Christ shall then rectify all those grievances, and shall separate the wheat from the tares: the good he shall place upon his right hand, elevated in the air, that all the world may honor them as holy; and the wicked shall stand far at his left, remaining upon the earth to their own confusion and the scorn of all.

How shall the sinners envy the just, when they shall see them so much honored, and themselves so much despised! How confounded shall be the kings of the earth, when they shall behold their vassals in glory, and lords when they shall see their slaves amongst the angels, and themselves in equal rank with devils! For it seems the devils then shall assume bodies of air, that they may be sensibly seen by the wicked, and shall stand amongst them, for their greater affront and torment.

SECTION III.

Immediately the books of all men's consciences shall be opened, and their sins published to the whole world; the most secret sins of their hearts, and those filthy acts which were committed in private; those sins which through shame and bashfulness were concealed in confession or covered with excuses, crooked and sinister intentions, hidden and unknown treacheries, counterfeit and dissembling virtues, all shall then be manifested; feigned friends, adulterous wives, unfaithful servants, false witnesses, shall all, to their great shame and confusion, be then discovered. If we are now so sensible when people murmur at us, or that some infamous act of ours is known to one or two persons, how shall we be then troubled, when all our faults together are made known to all, both men and angels! How many are there now, who, if they imagined that their father or brother knew what they had committed in secret, would die with grief! And yet in that day not only fathers and brothers, but friends and enemies, and all the world, shall to their confusion know it. The virtuous actions of the just, how secretly soever performed, their holy thoughts, their pious desires, their pure intentions, their good works, which the world now either disesteems, or calumniates as madness, shall then be manifested, and they for them shall be honored by the whole world; virtue shall then appear admirable in all her beauty, and vice horrible in all her deformity. It shall then be seen how decent and beautiful it is for the great to humble themselves, for the offended to be silent, and pardon injuries; on the other side, how insolent and horrid a thing it is to trample upon the poor, to wrong the humble, to desire revenge, and lord it over others. Then shall be also discovered the good works of the wicked, but for their greater affront, in that they have not persevered in doing well; and that calling to remembrance the good counsel and advice, which they have given to others, which have been a means of their salvation, they may be now confounded to have neglected it themselves, to their own damnation. The sins also of the just shall be published, but with all their repentance, and the good which they have drawn from their faults, in such sort as it shall no ways redound to their shame, but be an argu-

ment of rendering thanks and divine praises to the Lord, who was pleased to pardon them. But nothing shall be of greater despitte and confusion to sinners, than to behold those, who have committed equal and greater sins than themselves, to be then in glory, because they made use of the time of repentance, which they despised and neglected. This confusion shall be augmented by that inward charge, which God shall lay against them of his divine benefits, to which their angel guardians shall assist, by giving testimony how often they have dissuaded them from their evil courses, and how rebellious and refractory they have still been to their holy inspirations. The saints also shall accuse them, that they have laughed at their good counsels, and shall set forth the dangers, to which they themselves have been subject by their ill example.

The just Judge shall then immediately pronounce sentence in favor of the good, in these words of love and mercy (Abul. in Mat. Jansen. Sot. Les. l. 13. c. 22. et alii): "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom which was prepared for you, from the creation of the world." O what joy shall then fill the saints, and what spite and envy shall burst the hearts of sinners! but more when they shall hear the contrary sentence pronounced against themselves, Christ speaking to them with that severity, which was signified by the prophet Isaiah, when he said, "His lips were filled with indignation, and his tongue was a devouring fire." More terrible than fire shall be those words of the Son of God, to those miserable wretches, when they shall hear him say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into eternal fire, prepared for Satan and his angels." With this sentence they shall remain for ever overthrown, and covered with eternal sorrow and confusion. Ananias and Saphira were struck dead, only with hearing the angry voice of St. Peter; what shall the reprobate be in hearing the incensed voice of Christ? This may appear by what happened to St. Catharine of Sienna (In vita ejus, c. 24.), who being reprehended by St. Paul, who appeared to her, only because she did not better employ some little portion of time, said that she had rather be disgraced before the whole world, than to suffer again what she did by that reprehension. But what is this in respect of that reprehension of the Son of God, in the day of vengeance? For if when he was led himself to be judged, he with only two words, *I am*, overthrew the astonished multitude of soldiers to the ground, how shall he speak when he comes to judge? In the book of the lives of the Fathers, composed by Severus Sulpitius and Cassianus (In vita PP. l. 5. apud Rosul.), it is written of a certain young man, desirous to become a monk, whom his mother by many reasons, which she alleged, pretended to dissuade, but all in vain, for he would by no means alter his intention, defended himself still from her importunity with this answer: "I will save my soul,

I will ensure my salvation ; it is that which most imports me." She perceiving that her modest requests prevailed nothing, gave him leave to do as he pleased ; and he, according to his resolution, entered into religion ; but soon began to flag and fall from his fervor, and to live with much carelessness and negligence. Not long after his mother died, and he himself fell into a grievous infirmity, and being one day in a trance, was rapt in spirit before the judgment-seat of God. He there found his mother, and divers others, expecting his condemnation ; she turning her eyes, and seeing her son amongst those who were to be damned, seemed to remain astonished, and spoke to him in this manner : " Why, how now, son ; is 'all come to end in this ? Where are those words thou saidst to me, 'I will save my soul ?' Was it for this thou didst enter into religion ?" The poor man being confounded and amazed, knew not what to answer ; but soon after, when he returned to himself, and the Lord was pleased that he recovered and escaped his infirmity, and considering that this was a divine admonition, he gave so great a turn, that the rest of his life was holy tears and repentance ; and when many wished him to moderate and remit something of that rigor, which might be prejudicial to his health, he would not admit of their advices, but still answered, " I who could not endure the reprehension of my mother, how shall I, in the day of judgment, endure that of Christ and his angels ?" Let us often think of this, and let not only the angry voice of our Saviour make us tremble, but that terrible sentence, which shall separate the wicked from his presence. Raphael Columba (Raph. Columb. Ser. 2. Domin. in Quad.) writes of Philip II., king of Spain, that being at mass, he heard two of his grandees, who were near him, in discourse about some worldly business, which he then took no notice of ; but mass being ended, he called them with great gravity, and said to them, only these few words : " You two appear no more in my presence : " which were of that weight, that one of them died of grief, and the other ever after remained stupified and amazed. What shall it then be, to hear the King of heaven and earth say, " Depart, ye cursed ? " and if the words of the Son of God be so much to be feared, what shall be his works of justice ?

At that instant the fire of that general burning shall invest those miserable creatures (Less. l. 13. c. 23.) : the earth shall open, and hell shall enlarge his throat, to swallow them for all eternity ; accomplishing the malediction of Christ, and of the Psalm (Psalm. liv.), which says, " Let death come upon them, and let them sink alive into hell." And in another place (Psalm. cxxxix.), " Coals of fire shall fall upon them, and thou shalt cast them into the fire, and they shall not subsist in their miseries." And in another Psalm (Psalm. x.) : " Snares, fire and sulphur shall rain upon sinners." Finally, that shall be executed, which was spoken by St.

John (Apoc. xx.), that the devil, death and hell, and all who were not written in the book of life, were cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where they shall be eternally tormented with Anti-christ and his false prophets. And this is the second death, bitter and eternal, which comprehends both the souls and the bodies of those who have died the spiritual death of sin, and the corporal death, which is the effect of it. The just shall then rejoice, according to David (Ps. lvii.), beholding the vengeance which the divine justice shall take upon sinners, and sing another song, like that of Moses (Exod. xv.), when the Egyptians were drowned in the Red sea, and that song of the Lamb, related by St. John (Apoc. vx.): "Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God! omnipotent, just and righteous are thy ways, King of all eternity! who will not fear thee, O Lord, and magnify thy name?" With those, and a thousand other songs of joy and jubilee, they shall ascend above the stars in a most glorious triumph, until they arrive in the empyreal heaven, where they shall be placed on thrones of glory, which they shall enjoy for an eternity of eternities. In the mean time, the earth, which was polluted by having sustained the bodies of the damned, shall be purified in that general burning; and then shall be renewed the earth, the heavens, the stars, and the sun, which shall shine seven times more than before; and the creatures, which have here been violated and oppressed by the abuse of man, (whereof some had taken arms against him, to revenge the injuries of their Creator, and others groaned under their burden with grief and sorrow,) shall then rejoice to see themselves freed from the tyranny of sin and sinners, and, joyful of the triumph of Christ, shall put on mirth and gladness.

This is the end wherein all time is to terminate, and this the catastrophe so fearful to the wicked, where all things temporal are to conclude. Let us therefore take heed how we use them; and that we may use them well, let us be mindful of this last day, this day of justice and calamity, this day of terror and amazement; the memory whereof will serve much for the reformation of our lives. Let us think of it and fear it, for it is the most terrible of all things terrible, and the consideration of it most profitable and available, to cause in us a holy fear of God, and to convert us to him. John Curopolata writes of Bogoris, king of the Bulgarians, a pagan, who was so much addicted to the hunting of wild beasts, that he desired to have them painted in his palace, in all their fury and fierceness; and to that end, commanded Methodius, the monk, a skilful painter, to paint them in so horrible a manner, as the very sight might make the beholders tremble. The discreet monk did it not, but in the place of it painted the day of judgment, and presented it to the king, who beholding that terrible act of justice, and the coming of the Son of God, to judge the world, crowning and rewarding the just, and punishing the wicked, was

much astonished at it; and being after instructed, left his bad life, and was converted to the faith of Christ. If only then the day of judgment painted, was so terrible, what shall it be being executed? Almost the same happened to St. Dositheus, who being a young man, pampered and brought up in pleasures, had not in his whole life so much as heard of the day of judgment, until by chance he beheld a picture, in which were represented the pains of the damned, at which he was much amazed, and not knowing what it was, was informed of it by a matron present, which he apprehended so deeply, that he fell half dead upon the ground, not being able to breathe for fear and terror. After coming to himself, he demanded what he should do, to avoid that miserable condition: it was answered him by the same matron, that he should fast, pray and abstain from flesh, which he immediately put in execution; and though many of his house and kindred endeavored to divert and dissuade him, yet the holy fear of God, and the dread of eternal condemnation which he might incur, remained so fixed in his memory, that nothing could withdraw him from his rigorous penance and holy resolution, until becoming a monk, he continued with much fruit and profit. Let us, therefore, whilst we live, ever preserve in our memory this day of terror, that we may hereafter enjoy security, for the whole eternity of God.

THE
THIRD BOOK
OF THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TEMPORAL AND
ETERNAL.

CHAPTER I.

The Mutability of Things Temporal makes them worthy of Contempt.

HITHERTO we have spoken of the shortness of time, and consequently of all things temporal, and of the end wherein they are to conclude. Nothing is exempted from death; and therefore not only human life, but all things which follow time, and even time itself, at last, must die. Wherefore Hesychius, as he is translated by St. John Damascen (Damas. in Par. l. 1.), says, that the splendor of this world is but as withered leaves, bubbles of water, smoke, stubble, a shadow, and dust driven by the wind; all things that are of earth being to end in earth. But this is not all; for, besides the certainty of end, they are infected with another mischief, which renders them much more contemptible than that, which is their instability and continual changes, whereto they are subject even whilst they are. For, as time itself is in a perpetual succession and mutation, as being the brother and inseparable companion of motion, so it fixes this ill condition to most of those things which pass along in it, which not only have an end, and that a short one, but even during that shortness of time which they last, have a thousand changes, and, before their end, many ends, and before their death, many deaths; each particular change which our life suffers, being the death of some state or part of it. For, as death is the total change of life, so every change is the death of some part. Sickness is the death of health, sleeping of waking, sorrow of joy, impatience of quiet, youth of infancy, and age of youth. The same condition has the universal world, and all things in it; for which cause they

deserve so much contempt, that Marcus Aurelius (Aur. Anton. l. 6. de vita sua) the emperor, wondered, that there could be found a man so senseless as to value them; and therefore speaks in this manner: "Of that very thing, which is now in doing, some part is already vanished: changes and alterations continually innovate the world, as that immense space of time by a perpetual flux renews itself. Whoever, therefore, shall esteem those things which never subsist, but pass along in this headlong and precipitate river of time, is as he who sets his affection upon some little bird, which passes along in the air, and is no more seen." Thus much from this philosopher. This very cause of the little value of things temporal, proceeding from their perpetual changes, together with the end whereto they are subject, is, as St. Gregory (Greg. l. 34. Moral.) notes, signified to us by that woman in the Apocalypse, who had the moon under her feet, and her head adorned with twelve stars. Certainly, the moon, as well as the stars, might have been placed in her diadem; but it was trodden under foot, by reason of the continual changes and alterations which it suffers, whereby it becomes a figure of things temporal, which change not only every month, but every day; the same day being, as Euripides says, now a mother, then a step-mother. The same was also signified by the angel, who, crowned with a rainbow, descended from heaven, to proclaim that all time was to end; with his right foot, which presses and treads more firmly, he stood upon the sea, which, by reason of its great unquietness, is also a figure of the instability of this world. And, therefore, with much reason did the angel, who had taught us by his voice, that all time and temporal things were to have an end, show us also by this sign, that for their instability and inconstancy, they were, even before their end, to be trodden under foot and despised. But more lively is the same expressed by the same St. John (Apoc. xv. Ribera et Cornep.) when he beheld the saints standing upon the sea, to note that whilst they lived, they contemned and trampled under foot the transitory and fading things of this world; and to declare it more fully, he says, the sea was of glass, than which nothing is more frail, and although hard, yet brittle.

Needs must the instability of things temporal be very great, and therefore most despicable, because it proceeds from so many causes. For as the sea has two several kinds of motion, the first natural, by which it rises and falls daily, with continual ebbs and flows, so as the waves, when they are most quiet, are yet still moving and inconstant; the other violent, when the waters are raised and incensed by some furious tempest; in the same manner, the things of this world are naturally of themselves fading and transitory, and without any exterior violence, suffer a continual change, and run rolling on towards their end; but besides are

also subject to other unthought-of accidents and extraordinary violences, which force nature out of her course, and raise huge storms in the sea of this life, by which those things, which we most esteem, suffer shipwreck. For as the fairest flower withers of itself, yet is oftentimes before borne away by the wind, or perishes by storm of hail; the most exact beauties lose their lustre by age, but are often before blasted by some violent fever; the most costly garments wear out in time, if not before taken from us by the thief; the strongest and most sumptuous palaces decay with continuance, if before not ruined by fire or earthquakes: in like manner, both their own nature, and extrinsical violences, deprive temporal things even of time itself, and trail them along in perpetual changes, leaving nothing stable. Let us cast our eyes upon those things, which men judge most worthy to endure, and made them to the end they should be eternal. How many changes and deaths have they suffered? St. Gregory Nazianzen (Nazian. in Monod. Plin. l. 36. c. 8.) places the city of Thebes, in Egypt, as the chiefest of those wonders, which the world admired. Most of the houses were of alabaster marble, spotted with drops of gold, which made them appear most splendid and magnificent. Upon the walls were many pleasant gardens, which they called *horti pensiles*, or hanging gardens; and the gates were no less than a hundred, out of which the prince could draw forth numerous armies, without noise or knowledge of the people. Pomponius Mela (Pompon. Mela, lib. 1. c. 9. Surias in Comm. an. 1517. Evag. l. 2. c. 1. Euseb. de Præpar. Hieron. in Dan. c. 1. Polus, l. 2. Rerum Indic. c. 68. Nicol. de Com. in Itin. apud Ram. t. 1. Plin. l. 6. c. 26. Sol. c. 3.) writes, that out of every gate there issued ten thousand armed men, which in the whole came to be an army of a million. Yet all this huge multitude could not secure it from a small army, conducted by a youth, who, as St. Jerome writes, took and destroyed it. Marcus Polus writes, that he passed by the city of Quinsay, which contained fourscore millions of souls; and Nicholas de Conti, passing not many years after by the same way, found the city wholly destroyed and begun to be newly built after another form. But yet greater was the city of Ninive, which, according to the holy Scripture, was of three days' journey; and it is now many ages since, that we know not where it stood. No less stately, but perhaps better fortified, was the city of Babylon; and that which was the imperial city of the world, became a desert, and a habitation of harpies, centaurs, satyrs, monsters and devils, as was foretold by the prophets; and the walls, which were two hundred feet in height, and fifty in breadth, could not defend it from time. And yet the holy Scripture describes Echatana, the chief city of Media, to be more strong than that. It was built by Arphaxad, king of the Medes, of square stone; the walls contained seventy cubits in breadth, thirty cu-

bits in height, and the towers which encompassed it, were each in height a hundred cubits; and yet for all this could not the Median empire, having such a head, escape from surrendering itself to the Assyrians. And the same monarch, who built it, and made the world tremble under him, came to lose it and himself, and having conquered many nations, became at last conquered and a slave to his enemies.

It is not much that cities have suffered so many changes, since monarchies and empires have done the same; and so often has the world changed its face, as it has changed its monarch and master. He who had seen the world as it was in the time of the Assyrians, would not have known it as it was in the time of the Persians; and he who knew it in the time of the Persians, would not have judged it for the same when the Greeks were masters. Afterwards, in the time of the Romans, it appeared with a face not known before; and he who knew it then, would not know it now; and some years hence it will put on another form, being in nothing more like itself than in its perpetual changes and alterations; for which cause it has been ever worthy of scorn and contempt, and more now than ever, since it becomes every day worse, and grows old, and decays with age, as St. Cyprian (Cyp. in Epist. ad Demet.) notes in these words: "Thou art to know that the world is already grown old, and does not remain in that strength and vigor which it had at first. This the world itself tells us, and the daily declining of it into worse, needs no other testimony. The winter wants the usual rains to fertilize the earth; the summer, the accustomed heat to ripen the corn; the autumn is not laden, as heretofore, with fruits, nor does the spring glad us with the delight and pleasure of its sweet temperature; out of the hollowed mountains are drawn less pieces of marble, and the exhausted mines yield less quantities of gold and silver. The laborer is wanting in the fields, the mariner on the seas, the soldier in the tents, innocency in the market-places, justice in the tribunals, sincerity in friendship, skill in arts, and discipline in manners. Necessary it is, that that should decay, which thus daily sinks into itself, and approaches towards an end." Immediately he adds: "This is the doom of the world, this the ordinance of God; all that is born must die, all that increases must grow old; the strong become feeble, the great diminish, and when diminished, perish. Anciently our lives extended beyond eight hundred or nine hundred years; now few arrive even to a hundred. We see boys grown grey, and our age ends not in decrepit years, but then begins; and in our very birth we draw near our ends, and he who is now born, with the age of the world degenerates. Let no man therefore wonder, that the parts of the world decay, since the whole goes to ruin." Neither is the world only grown worse in the natural frame of it, but is also much defaced in the moral;

the manners of men have altered it more than the violences and encounters of the elements. The empire of the Assyrians much corrupted the primitive simplicity and innocence of it ; and what they wanted was effected by the Persians, and wherein they failed, by the Greeks, and wherein they, by the Romans, and wherein they, is abundantly made up by us ; for the pride of monarchs is the ruin and destruction of good manners. And, therefore, to the fair monarchies may be fitly applied that which was foretold by the prophet Joel : " What was left by the eruck, was eaten by the locust ; what was left by the locust, was eaten by the bruke ; and what was left by the bruke, was devoured by the blast."

SECTION II.

More are the causes of alterations in the world than in the ocean. For, besides the condition of human things, which, as well intrinsically, and of their own nature, as by the external violences which they suffer, are subject to perish, the very spirit and humor of man being fickle and inconstant, is the occasion of great changes. Not without great proportion did the Holy Ghost say, that the fool changed like the moon, which is not only mutable in figure, but in color. The natural philosophers observe three colors in the moon, pale, red, and white ; the first foretells rain, the second wind, and the third clears up with hopes of fair weather. In the same manner is the heart of man changed by three most violent affections, represented by those three colors. That of pale, the color of gold, coveting riches more frail and slippery than water ; that of red, the color of purple, gaping after the wind of vain honors ; the last of white, the color of mirth and jollity, running after the gusts and pleasures of this life. With these three affections, man is in perpetual change and motion ; and as there are some plants which follow the course of the moon, still turning and moving according to her course, so these alterations in human affections draw after them, and are the cause of, these great changes and revolutions, which happen in the world. How many kingdoms were overthrown by the covetousness of Cyrus ! The ambition of Alexander did not only destroy a great part of the world, but made it put on a far other face than it had before. What part of Troy was left standing by the lascivious love of Paris, who was not only the ruin of Greece, but set on fire his own country ? That which time spares, is often snatched away by the covetousness of the thief ; and how many lives are cut off by revenge, before they arrive to old age ? There is no doubt but human affections are those fierce winds, which trouble the sea of this world ; and as the ocean ebbs and flows according to the course of the moon, so the things of this life conform their motions to human passions. There is no stability

in any thing, and least in man, who is not only changeable in himself, but changes all things besides.

So unstable and variable is man, that David to some of his psalms gives these words for a title: *For those who shall change*; and St. Basil, explicating the same title, says, It was meant of man, whose life is a perpetual change; to which is conformable the translation of Aquila, who instead of those words renders it, *Pro foliis, for the leaves*; because man is moved by every wind, as the leaves of a tree. This mutability is very apparent in the passion of Christ our Redeemer, which is the subject of the 78th Psalm, which bears this title. They of Jerusalem having received him with greater honor than they ever gave to man, within four days after treated him with the greatest infamy and villany that was possible to be expressed by devils. There is no trust in the heart of man; now it loves, now it abhors, now desires, now fears, now esteems, now despises. Who is not amazed at the change of St. Peter, who after so many promises and resolutions to die for his master, within a few hours swore as many false oaths, that he knew him not? What shall become of the reed and bulrush, when the oak and cedar totters? Neither is the change of Amnon a little to be wondered at, who loving Thamar with that violence of passion, that he fell sick for her, immediately after abhorred her so much, that he barbarously turned her out of his chamber. But I know nothing that can more evidently set forth the mutability of human affections, than that memorable accident which happened in Ephesus. (Petron. Arbit. tract. de leg. connub. leg. non. num. 97.) There lived in that city a matron of an honest repute and conversation, whose husband dying, left her the most disconsolate and sad widow that ever was heard of; all was lamentations, tearing and disfiguring her face with her nails; and not content with the usual ceremonies of widows of those times, she enclosed herself with his dead body in the sepulchre, which anciently was a vault in the fields, capacious and prepared for that use; there she resolved to famish herself, and follow him into the next world; and had already for four days abstained from all manner of sustenance. It happened that near that place a certain malefactor was executed, and lest his kindred should by night steal away his body and give it burial, a soldier was appointed to watch it, who being weary, and remembering that not far off the widow was enclosed in the sepulchre, resolved for a time to quit his charge, and try what entertainment he could find with her. Whereupon carrying his supper along with him, he entered the vault, and at first had much ado to persuade the grieved widow to take part with him, to forsake her desperate resolution of famishing, and be content to live; but a while after, having prevailed in this, and passing further with the same oratory, he persuaded her, who had not

denied to share with him in his supper, to afford him the fruition of her person, which she likewise did. In the mean time, whilst the soldier, transported with his pleasure, forgot his duty, the friends of the executed malefactor stole away the body; which being perceived by the soldier, who now, satiated with his dalliance, was returned to his guard, and knowing his offence to be no less than capital, he repairs with great fear and amazement to his widow, and acquaints her with the mischance, who was not slow in providing a remedy; but taking the dead body of her husband, which had cost her so many tears, advised him to hang it upon the gallows, to supply the room of the malefactor.—Such is the inconstancy of human hearts, more variable than seems possible, which, changing in themselves, draw within their compass the rest of the things of this world.

Philo (Philo, l. de Jos.), considering and admiring so great vanity and change, speaks after this manner: “Those things which concern the body, are they not dreams? This momentary beauty, does it not wither even before it flourish? Our health is uncertain, exposed to so many infirmities; a thousand griefs happening by divers occasions abate our strength and forces; the quickness and vigor of our senses are corrupted by vicious humors. Who then can be ignorant of the baseness of exterior things? One day often makes an end of great riches; many personages of great honor and esteem, changing their fortune, become infamous; great empires and kingdoms have in a short time been ruined. Of this Dionysius is a sufficient witness, who, thrust from his throne, from a king of Sicily, became a school-master in Corinth, and taught boys. The like happened to Cræsus, the most rich king of Lydia, who being in hope to overthrow the Persians, not only lost his own kingdom, but fell into the power of his enemies, and failed little of being burned alive. Particular persons are not only witnesses that all human things are dreams, but cities, nations, kingdoms, Greeks and barbarians, the isles, and those who inhabit the continent of Europe, Asia, the East and West, nothing remains like to itself.” Certainly, as Philo says, the instability of human things makes them appear not only a dream, but as a dream of a shadow, rather than of any thing solid and consistent. Let us hear also what St. Chrysostom (Hom. de pœnit.), says and counsels us concerning the same matter: “All things present (says he) are more frail and weak than the webs of spiders, and more deceitful than dreams; for as well the goods as the evils have their end. Since therefore we esteem things present but as a dream, and we ourselves to be but as in an inn, from whence we are suddenly to depart, let us take care for our journey, and furnish ourselves with provision, and a viaticum for eternity; let us clothe ourselves with such garments, as we may carry along with us. For as no man can

lay hold on his shadow, so no man retains things human, which partly in death, and partly before death, fly from us, and run more swiftly than a rapid river. The contrary are those things which are to come, which neither suffer age, nor change, nor are subject to revolutions; but perpetually flourish, and persevere in a continued felicity. Take heed, then, of admiring those riches, which remain not with their masters, but change in every instant, and leap from one to another, and from this to that. It behoves thee to despise all those things, and to esteem them as nothing." Let it suffice to hear what the apostle says, that "Things that are seen, are temporal, but those which are not seen, are eternal." Things human disappear more suddenly than a shadow.



CHAPTER II.

How great and desperate soever our Temporal Evils are, yet Hope may make them tolerable.

FROM this inconstancy of human things we may extract a constancy for ourselves: First, by despising things so frail and transitory, which, as we have already said, is a sufficient ground for their contempt; secondly, by a resolute hope and expectation of an end or change in our adversity or afflictions, since nothing here below is constant, but all mutable and unstable; and as things sometimes change from good to evil, so they may also from evil to good. And as great prosperity has often been the occasion of greater misery, so we may hope our greatest misfortunes may produce a greater happiness. Wherefore, as in eternal evils, because immutable, we want the hope of a happy condition, so in temporal evils, how great soever, we ought not to despair, which we daily see confirmed with most unexpected successes. Let us therefore only fear eternal evils, which are not capable of remedy, and let us not despair and afflict ourselves for the temporal, which have it, and imports little, whether they have it or not. This is not ill expressed, by that which happened to the Roman Appius, who, being proscribed and condemned to banishment, became, by the treachery of his slaves and servants, in danger of his life, who, out of covetousness to possess themselves of the goods and treasure which he carried along with him, cast him forth into a small shallop, and sailed away with the ship. But from this misfortune sprung his deliverance; for not long after the ship sunk, in which his slaves were drowned, and he himself (who had perished, if he had been with them) escaped with this little loss, and came safe into Sicily. Aristomenes being taken by his enemies, and cast into an obscure dungeon,

was there, at last, by famine, and the unwholesomeness of the place, to end his days; but in the midst of despair, an unexpected accident gave him hope of delivery. A fox by chance passing through a little hole under ground, entered into the dungeon, where he had made his den, which being perceived by Aristomenes, he laid fast hold on him with one hand, and with the other enlarged the passage, and voiding the loose earth as he went, followed his guide, who at last safely conducted him into the open field, from whence he escaped in safety, when his enemies thought he had been dead. There is no condition of life so miserable, wherein we ought to despair, nay, wherein we may not hope to better our fortunes. To how many has a seeming unlucky accident been the occasion of great preferment, and a disgrace, of honors? Diogenes, being condemned for false money, and held for an infamous person, was the occasion of his receiving respect and honor from princes—Alexander, the master of the world, coming to visit him. Phalareus being wounded in his breast by his enemies, was cured of an imposthume, held desperate by the physicians. Galen (Galen. l. de Sim. c. 11.), writes of a leper, who was cured by drinking a little wine, wherein a viper was by chance drowned, which the reapers not being willing to drink themselves, gave him out of compassion, thinking to kill him quickly, and rid him of those grievous pains which he endured; but that which they thought would be his death, became his life; for the drinking of the wine caused the scales of his flesh to fall, and restored him to his health. Benivenius (Beniv. c. 15.) testifies, that he knew a boy that was lame of both feet, in such sort, that he could not go without crutches; but being struck with the plague, and recovering his health, he remained sound of his feet, and without lameness. The same author writes of a certain architect, who had one leg shorter than the other; but falling from a high tower, he remained with one leg as long as the other. Alexander Benedictus (Alex. Bened. lib. 3.) rehearses, that he knew a blind man, who being wounded grievously in the head, recovered his sight. Rondelejus certifies, that a mad woman, having her head broken, returned to her wits. Plutarch writes of one Prometheus, who had an ugly humor and swelling in his face, who having spent much money upon surgeons and physicians to little purpose, was, by a wound which his enemy by chance gave him in the same place, perfectly cured, the hurt leaving no blemish or deformity behind it. The injuries done to Joseph by his brothers, promoted him to the greatest honors of the Egyptian empire. The heap of miseries wherein holy Job was involved, concluded in a double fortune and felicity. Jacob flying his country with no more wealth than a walking-staff, returned rich and prosperous, with a numerous family.

There is no drooping for unfortunate successes, since they often prove the beginning of great felicities; and oftentimes we may rejoice for those evils, for which we have shed tears. But that we may more clearly perceive the mutability of things, and the hope we may entertain (even in the depth of our calamities) of a better condition, I shall here recount the story of Marcus and Barbula, (Fulgosius l. 6.) two Roman gentlemen. Marcus, who was prætor, followed the party of Brutus, and being overthrown with his general, in the Philippian fields, and taken prisoner, feigned himself to be of base condition, and so was bought by Barbula for a slave; who perceiving in him, notwithstanding his outward appearance, a deep judgment, great discretion, and a noble spirit, began to suspect him to be something else than what he seemed; and calling him aside, requested him to reveal who he was, assuring him, that although he were one of the rebels, he would not fail to procure his pardon. Marcus, smiling, assured him he was no such man, and Barbula, to let him see how useless it was to conceal who he was, told him, he was resolved to carry him along with him to Rome, where he was certain to be discovered. Marcus answered, With all his heart; not doubting but the great change of his habit and condition would free him from the knowledge of any; but he found himself deceived; for he was no sooner arrived at Rome, but waiting upon his master at the door of one of the consuls, he was known by a Roman citizen, who immediately discovered him in secret to his patron. Barbula handled the matter so discreetly, that without acquainting his counterfeit slave, he went to Agrippa, by whose means he obtained a pardon from Augustus, who, in a short time, became so well satisfied of Marcus, that he received him amongst his most private friends. Not long after, Barbula, following the side of Mark Antony, was taken in the Actean war, and, unknown, was likewise bought by Marcus amongst other slaves. But so soon as it came to his knowledge, that he was his ancient master, he repaired to Augustus, begged his pardon, and restored him to his liberty; returning in the same manner the favor which he had received. Who sees not here those secret channels, by which blessings are derived, and fortune changed? Marcus enjoyed the dignity of a prætor, was suddenly after a slave, then a friend of Cæsar's, and a redeemer of his redeemer; arriving at higher preferments by his slavery and captivity, than by his birth and former dignity. Whilst life lasts, there is no misfortune without hope; and affliction, although we look upon things within their own limits and natural disposition, comes often home laden with prosperities; but if we look upon them with that divine hope, which we ought to have, there is no evil from whence we may not derive a good. To what greater straits can one be brought, than to be drawn forth to execution,

and held guilty by the consent of all, as Susanna was? But in the very way to justice, God raised her up a salvation, both of life and honor, converting her unjust infamy into a great esteem, and admiration of her virtue. What remedy for Daniel, when he was thrown into a cave amongst hungry lions? But where he expected to be devoured by wild beasts, he found comfort. The three children, who were cast into the fiery furnace in Babylon, where there was nothing to be hoped for but death, found refreshment, life and content. David, when he was compassed in by the soldiers of Saul, despaired of safety, yet escaped the danger. There is no evil in this life, which even with the hopes of this life may not be assuaged; but with the hopes of the other who will not be comforted? Let us, therefore, fear only eternal evils, which have neither comfort, hope, nor possibility of amendment.

CHAPTER III.

We ought to consider, what we may come to be.

BUT, that we may as little presume upon things favorable and successful, as despair, when they are averse and contrary, this excellent instruction may be drawn from their inconstancy, which is, Not to confide at all in human prosperity. For neither kingdom, empire, papacy, nor any greatness whatsoever, can secure their owners from ruin and misfortune; and every one ought, with holy Job, to consider what he may come to be. There is no fortune so high, to which may not succeed a condition as low and disastrous. Let the great and rich man consider, that all his wealth and power may fail, and he be driven to beg an alms. Let the king consider, he may become a mechanic tradesman. Let the emperor consider, that even in his own court he may be dragged forth to justice, and have dirt flung in his face, and be publicly executed. Let the popes consider, that some of them have been forced to kiss the feet of other popes. These things seem incredible, and mortals are hardly drawn to believe them. But let no man wonder at the success of any, since not only kings, emperors and popes have been condemned, but saints; and such, who by their holiness have wrought miracles, have fallen, and been damned in hell-fire. Let us all, therefore, preserve ourselves in humility; let us not confide in prosperity, nor presume upon our virtues, though never so perfect, since every man is subject to fall into those misfortunes he little thinks of.

Who would imagine, that so opprobrious affronts could befall a Roman emperor as happened to Andronicus in 1285, whose history I shall here relate to confirm that, which, if grave authors had

not reported, would seem incredible. Nicetas (Nicetas Chroniat. annal. lib. 2.) writes, and others bear him witness, that this emperor, in the third year of his reign, was laid hold upon by his own vassals; a strong chain and collar of iron, as if he had been some mastiff dog, fastened about his neck; his hands manacled, and his feet fettered with heavy shackles; the most ordinary sort of people taunted him with bitter scoffs, buffeted him upon the face, punched him upon the body, plucked his beard from his chin, drew him up and down by the hair of his head, knocked out his teeth, and, for his greater affront, scourged him as they do children. After this they brought him into the public market-place, that all who would, might abuse him; and even women buffeted him: which done, they cut off his right hand, hurried him into prison, and flung him into the common hole, where the most notorious thieves and murderers were lodged, leaving him nothing to feed on, or so much as any to give him a cup of water. From thence, some few days after, they drew him forth, plucked out one of his eyes, mounted him naked (saving a little short cloak, which covered nothing almost of his body) upon a lean, ragged camel, his face backward, holding the tail in his hand instead of a sceptre, and a halter in place of a diadem. In this equipage they brought him again into the market-place, where the injuries, scorns, and ignominies put upon him by the base multitude, are not imaginable. Some cast onions and rotten fruit at him, others pricked him in the sides with spits, others stuffed his nostrils with filth; some flung dirt and stones at him, and called him by most opprobrious names, and there wanted not an impudent baggage, who running into the kitchen, fetched a pot of scalding water and threw it in his face. There was no low cobbler, tinker, or tradesman, who found not out some way or other to affront him. At last they hung him by the heels between two pillars, and there left him to die. But then did neither his own courtiers and household servants pardon him; one thrust his sword up to the hilt in his bowels; others, to prove which had the sharpest sword, tried them in his flesh. At last the miserable emperor (although most happy if he were saved) brought with much ado that arm, which had lost the hand, and yet ran with blood, to moisten his dry mouth, and so expired. In this manner ended the monarch of the East: but not yet his ignominy; for during three days after they suffered his dead body to hang upon the gibbet, which was at last taken down, more to free the living from horror, than for compassion to the dead, whom they buried like a dog. Let every one in this glass behold what the things of this life are. Let him compare Andronicus, with Andronicus; Andronicus emperor and Augustus, with Andronicus a prisoner, and publicly executed; behold him first clothed in purple, adored by nations, commanding the East, his temples encircled with a royal diadem, the im-

perial sceptre in his hands, and his very shoes studded with oriental pearls; then look upon him insulted over by the basest of his people, buffeted by women, and pelted with dirt and stones in his imperial city. Who would believe, that he whom the people thronged to look upon, as upon some god, when he passed through the streets of Constantinople in his royal chariot, covered with plates of burnished gold, guarded with excellent captains, and waited on by the princes of his empire, should, by those very same persons who had so lately taken their oaths of loyalty, and sworn to defend him, be so traitorously and barbarously handled? Finally, that he who had commanded justice to pass upon so many, should himself come to be sentenced with greater infamy than any of them? Who could imagine that one subject should be so suddenly capable of such wide extremes, and that so great glory should conclude in so much ignominy? This is enough to make us condemn all temporal goods and human felicity, which not only pass away with time, but often change into greater misfortunes. What esteem can that merit, which stands exposed to so much misery; which is by so much more sensible to the sufferer, by how much it was less expected? To this may be added another consideration of no small profit: That if this emperor passed to his salvation through so many affronts and cruel torments, what hurt did they do him? What imports it, that he was so unhappy in this life, if he were happy in the other? Certainly, he gave sufficient hopes of his contrition; for in all that lamentable and never-to-be-paralleled tragedy, no sign of impatience ever appeared in him; neither spoke he other words than these, "Lord, have mercy on me;" and when they abused and wounded him with so much cruelty, all he said was this, "Why do ye break this bruised reed?" Certainly, if he knew how to benefit himself (as it seems he did) by his misery, he was more happy in it than in his empire. The eternal is that which imports. As for the glory of his empire, and the misery of his ignominy, they are now past.

A greater emperor was Vitellius (Fulgos. l. 6.) than he, since not only the East, but West acknowledged him for the lord and monarch of the whole world. The riches he enjoyed were beyond estimation, and gold abounded with him, as stones of the streets with others. In Rome he was acknowledged Augustus, and saluted with so glorious titles, that he seemed to be all he could desire less than a god. But wherein ended all this majesty, but in the greatest infamy that can be imagined? for having tied a rope about his neck, and his hands behind him, torn his garments from his back, and stuck a dagger under his chin, they hauled him ignominiously up and down the streets of Rome, cast filth in his face, and reviled him with a thousand injurious speeches, and at last killed him in the market-place, and threw him down the Gemonies, where they used to fling the bodies of such offenders

as were not lawfully to be buried. A strange case, to what end some men are born; such care, trouble and circumspection, in bringing on a life to conclude in so disastrous a death! He who should know the ends of Andronicus and Vitellius, and should behold their birth, breeding, studies, pretences and recreations, should see them clad in silk and gold, and acknowledged emperors, would he say in his heart, that so much ado was necessary for such an end? Folly is all human greatness, since at last it must end, and perhaps in so disastrous a conclusion. With reason did Pachimeras say, it was safer to trust to a shadow, than to human happiness. Who could imagine, that the emperor Valerianus (*vide* Platin. Baro. Fulgos.), whom the king of Persia taking prisoner, kept enclosed in a cage, like some wild beast, used him as a footstool when he got on horseback, and after flayed his soldiers and salted them, could possibly come to such an end? Compare here the different conditions that may happen to a Roman emperor. Behold Valerianus mounted upon a brave courser, trapped with gold, clad in purple, crowned with the imperial diadem, adorned by nations, and commanding over kingdoms; and after see the same man enclosed like a beast, and trodden under the foot of a barbarous king. Such contrary fortunes happen in human life! Let us not therefore trust in it.

SECTION II.

Yet less imaginable seems that which happened to Pope John XXIII., when after four years' possession of the papacy, many princes of Europe having during that time, in token of obedience, kissed his feet, he himself came to kiss the feet of another pope; and having in his pontificate created many cardinals, took it at last, as a singular favor, to be made one himself. This seems incredible; but it is a true history. The mutability of human things produces so strange effects, that our imagination dares not feign them. Who would think, that the chief bishop should be made a captive, as this was in the council of Constance, assembled for the pacification of the schism, then reigning in the church? There he was deprived of his dignity, and himself confirmed his own deposition, and suffered in prison great misery, want and affliction; from whence he made an escape, and fled from place to place, until at length he became so well advised, as to put himself into the hands of Martin V., elected after his deposition, who had many cardinals then about him, created by this John, who beheld him who had made them, deprived of all dignities, humbly asking pardon of the new pope, whom he acknowledged for such, and esteemed it a great favor to receive his hat anew. Thus far can the instability of temporal goods arrive! Who could imagine that which happened to the emperor Zeno, who,

after he had possessed the empire many years, pampered in all the blandishments of so high a fortune, was at last constrained, through famine, to eat his clothes, and feed upon the flesh of his own arms? This emperor, being in a trance, was given out to be dead, and so buried in a vault; but returning afterwards to himself, he cried out aloud, naming those of his guard and his other servants, who though they heard him, would not help him. There he remained interred alive, eating his own flesh, as witnesses Cedrenus (*Cedren. in Com.*). Who would believe such a misfortune? But the misery, wherein human happiness often terminates, is not to be conceived.

The glory and riches of Belisarius (*Vid. Pet. Mex. in vita Justin. Crinit. et Volater.*) were greater than that of many kings. The world was amazed at his valor and courage: he overcame the Goths in many battles, and took their king prisoner; he made an end of the Vandals, and triumphed over their captive king Gili-mer; he triumphed also in the East over the Persians. His wealth was so great, that in one hour's space he gained all that the Vandals had scraped together in fourscore years. Who could imagine, that this so rich and glorious a captain should become a blind beggar, and beg an alms in the church of St. Sophia, and other public places? Dionysius the second possessed a wealthy kingdom in Sicily (*Egn. l. 6. c. 10. Portan. l. 2. c. 8. de Fort. domest.*): who would think that from a king, he should be necessitated to become a school-master? who would not wonder at the cozenage of the world, that should first see him in his royal palace, with a sceptre in his hand, compassed about with his servants, and the great ones of his kingdom, and should afterwards behold him in his school, managing a rod in the midst of a number of boys? What shall I say of king Adonibezec, who, after the conquest of seventy kings, died a slave, and, for his greater infamy, had the extremities of his hands and feet cut off? Spain shows queen Goswinda (*Max. an. 589.*), beloved and esteemed by king Leovigildus her husband, afterwards publicly executed and tormented in the market-place of Toledo. Of no less marvel is that which happened to the empress Maria, wife to Otho III., burned by order of justice; which being a story of memory, I shall relate it out of Godfridus Viterbiensis. (*Vid. Chr. Coriol. an. 658.*) These two passing by Modena, the empress became desperately enamoured of a young count, much a gentleman, and excellently accomplished in the lineaments of his body, but much more in the perfections of his mind, insomuch as he neglected and slighted the constant addresses and solicitations of this fond princess; who perceiving herself mocked, full of choler and madness, did, as Joseph's mistress, cry out, and accused the innocent count to the over-credulous emperor, that he would have forced her; who, without much search into the business, believed it, and caused

him to be beheaded ; which as soon as it came to the knowledge of his countess, a lady of a heroic and confident spirit, and fully satisfied of the goodness and innocency of her husband, at such time as the emperor gave audience, she entered into the presence, and flinging down the head of her husband before him, accused him as an unjust judge, and demanded justice of him against himself ; and for proof of what she said, offered herself to the then usual trial of burning iron : which being accepted, and the heated iron put into her hands, she handled it as if it had been a nosegay of flowers ; which being seen by the emperor, he confessed himself guilty ; but the countess, not so satisfied, cried out, that since he was faulty he ought to die, for that he had caused to be executed an innocent person ; neither could she be contented, until the sentence was pronounced against the empress (who was the author of that mischief) to be burned ; which was accordingly executed upon this great princess, wife to so potent an emperor, and daughter of the king of Arragon ; for neither crowns nor sceptres secure us from the inconstancy of human changes. Well was it said by St. Gregory Nazianzen, that we may better trust to the wind, or to letters written upon water, than to human felicity.

SECTION III.

What we have hitherto recounted are changes, not falls. That which we are to fear is a fall from sanctity and virtue, and this is properly to fall, when we descend from the state of grace to that of sin. The mutations of fortune are but exchanges of one condition for another. No man can fall when he is at the lowest ; and the lowest and basest of all things is human felicity, which when it quits us, we fall not, but change it, and perhaps for the better. The true falls are those which are spiritual ; and it may with reason amaze us to see, that on this part also we are exposed to uncertainties. But this may be our comfort, that temporal changes are not in our hands, but spiritual are. Our wealth, whether we will or no, may be taken from us, but grace, unless by our own fault, cannot. We may be bereaved of honors against our will, but not of virtue except we consent. Corporal goods may perish, be stolen, and lost a thousand manner of ways ; but spiritual goods can only be forsaken, and are then only lost, when we leave them by sin. This may make us tremble that they are lost, because we will lose them, and not being mutable in themselves, they change because we are mutable. That which has happened in this time is most lamentable. St. Peter Damian (Petr. Dami. l. 1. c. 10.) writes, that he knew a monk in the city of Benevento, named Madelmo, who arrived at so great sanctity of life, that being upon a Holy Saturday to fill a dozen of lamps, and oil failing for the last, he with great faith filled it with water,

and lighting it, it burned as the rest. Many other miracles he wrought in our Lord, for which he was in great esteem, both of the prince and citizens. But wherein ended this miraculous and venerable man? A strange change: God withdrawing his holy hand from him, he fell into such dishonesty of life, that he was taken and publicly whipped, and his head, for his greater ignominy, shaved like a slave. A lamentable tragedy is the life of man, wherein we behold so contrary extremes. The same St. Peter Damian (Petr. Dami. l. 1. c. 10.) writes, that he knew in the same city a priest of so great sanctity, that every day when he celebrated mass, the prince of Benevento beheld an angel descend from heaven, who took the divine mysteries from his hands to offer them to the Lord. Yet this man, so favored from above, fell into the like vice, that all might fear, and none be assured in any state whatsoever.

St. John Climacus relates the story of that young man, of whom we read in the lives of the fathers, who mounted to so high a degree of virtue, that he commanded the wild asses, and compelled them to serve the monks of the monastery; whom blessed St. Anthony compared to a ship laden with rich merchandize, sailing in the midst of the ocean, whose end was uncertain. Afterwards this so fervent youth fell most miserably, and bewailing his sin, said to some of the monks who passed by, "Speak to the old man (that is, St. Anthony) that he pray to God, that he would grant me yet ten days of repentance." The holy man hearing this, tore the hair from his head, and said, "A great pillar of the church is fallen:" and five days after the monk died, insomuch, that he who heretofore commanded the wild beasts of the wilderness, became a scorn to the devils, and he who preserved himself by bread from heaven, was afterwards deprived of his spiritual sustenance. Lamentable also is the accident related by Heraclides (Heracl. in Parad. And. Ebor. Ex. mem. t. 2. de mor. et for. mut.), of Hieron Alexandrinus, who having flourished many years in great virtue and fame of sanctity, left off all, and became an abandoned profligate. In the same manner Ptolemy the Egyptian, having passed fifteen years in the desert in continual prayer, sustaining himself only with bread and the dew which fell from heaven, came to leave all, and lead a most scandalous life. If we look into the holy Scriptures, we shall find greater changes and more lamentable falls. Who would think that Saul, chosen of God for very good, of an humble and patient spirit, should end in a luciferian pride, and in a mortal hatred against the best man in Israel? Who would think that a man so wise, and so religious as Solomon, should in his latter times be seduced by women, and erect temples to false gods? Finally, who would imagine that an apostle of Christ should die in

despair and hang himself? What man can then presume so much of himself, that he needs not stand in fear of what he may be?

CHAPTER IV.

The Changes of Human Things show clearly their Vanity, and how worthy they are to be contemned.

THIS inconstancy and change of things serves as a testimony of their vanity. Witness those who have had the largest experience of human greatness and felicity. Gilimer (Procop. lib. 2. de belle Vandalorum), king of the Vandals, was of great power, wealth and valor, but overcome by Belisarius, and deprived of Constantinople. When he approached the place where Justinian the emperor was seated on a throne of incomparable majesty, clothed in his imperial robes, and encompassed with the great princes of his empire, the captive king beholding him in so great glory, and himself a slave, abandoned by the whole world, neither wept nor complained, nor showed the least sign of sorrow or resentment, but only uttered that most true sentence of the wise man, "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity." He who knew this, no wonder, though in so great a misfortune, he had dry eyes. For, if he knew that all human greatness was vanity, wherefore should he grieve for that which was nothing? That is not worthy of grief, which deserves not love. Things so mutable are those below, that as they merit not our affections when we enjoy them, so they ought not to vex and afflict us when we lose them. This apprehension was the cause of the great equality of mind, which this prince expressed in all his actions, who was so far from showing any grief at the loss of his kingdom and fortunes, that he rather seemed to laugh and rejoice; and therefore, when he was overthrown in battle, and forced to fly into Numidia, where he fortified himself in one of the mountains, the enemy besieging and straitening him with want of victuals, he sent to the captain, who commanded in chief, to demand of him bread, a sponge, and a citron; bread to sustain his life, which was now likely to perish for want of food; a sponge to dry his eyes, for that having now entered into the consideration of the vanity of human things, and ashamed at his grief for the loss of them, he was resolved to change his passions, and rather laugh than weep—for what being possessed afforded no security, the same being lost brought no prejudice—and to this end demanded a citron; for that having wiped his eyes from their fruitless tears, he was now resolved to change his complaints into songs, and his grief into content, which consists not so much in the abundance of a great fortune,

as in the sufficiency of a moderate. And with reason might he take the citron ; for if he well considered, he might rejoice even in his misfortune, since his loss made him understand that deceit of the world, which his most ample kingdom never could, and freed him not only from cares and troubles, but from sins, which, in the prosperity of this life, have a larger field than in an adverse fortune. Possessed of this truth, they took him prisoner, and brought him to the conqueror Belisarius. The captive king came with those expressions of joy and mirth, that the general seeing him laugh, whom he judged to have so great a cause of tears, thought his grief had distracted him, and that he had lost his wits ; but he never had them more perfect, since he laughed at human greatness, and now perceived how ridiculous a thing is that which we call felicity, and in his heart rightly esteemed it, as it is, a vanity of vanities.

I believe the same judgment, which this king gave of the vanity of temporal things, would, if it had been asked, be given by the emperor Andronicus, when, naked, and his head shaved like a slave, he was infamously dragged through the streets of Constantinople. What was then his imperial diadem ? his throne and majesty ? what his ornaments of gold and silver ? All was vanity, and a vanity of vanities. Neither would this be denied by Vitellius, when they threw dirt in his face, and hauled him into the market-place to be executed. What were then the spectacles of the amphitheatre, and games of the circus, the dominion of the world, but vanity of vanities, and universal vanity ? The same would Cræsus have preached from the flames, the tyrant Bajazet from his cage, king Bolislaus from his kitchen, and Dionysius from his school. If alive, they would have said this, upon the sight only of the instability of this life, what would they not say upon the experience of eternity, whereinto they are entered ? Let us take the opinion of those princes who are damned, what they now think of the majesty, which they enjoyed in this life : they will say it was a smoke, a dream, a shadow. And without doubt those kings, who are now in heaven, in possession of those eternal joys, will say the same, that all felicity here below is poor, scarce and short, and vanity of vanities, and worse, if it has been an occasion of sin. But it is not needful to call witnesses from the other life, since the vanity of this is so evident, that he who shall set himself to consider the greatness of this world, shall perceive, that by how much it is more glorious, by so much it is more vain. What greater majesty than that of the Roman empire ? Let us call to mind what happened in that. Scarce was the election of a Roman emperor known, before they, who chose him, or some more subtle or powerful than they, had murdered him. And although they studied nothing more than to preserve themselves in the imperial dignity, yet few there were that could effect it. Amongst twenty

emperors, who passed between Antoninus, the philosopher, and Claudius II., not one escaped a violent death; besides many other tyrants, who took the name of emperors; as in Galienus's time, thirty usurped that title, and murdered one another: inso-much, that he who called himself an emperor was almost certain to die a violent death; so as the greatest felicity of the world was tied to the greatest mishap. And it is to be wondered, that any (though almost forced) would accept the diadem. But such is the folly of men, that having before their eyes so many lamentable examples, they gape after those glories, which hardly last from morning until night. Some of them had scarce been saluted emperors, when they were cut in pieces. Aurelianus was one of those, who exhibited the most glorious triumph that ever Rome beheld, where were shown an infinite number of captives from the three parts of the world, many rare beasts, as tigers, lions, ounces, elephants, dromedaries, an immense quantity of arms taken from the conquered enemies, three most sumptuous chariots, one of the king of the Palmerins, another of the Persians, and a third of the Goths, two who called themselves emperors, and the great queen Zenobia, adorned with most precious jewels and rich pearls, and fettered in chains of gold. He himself entered in a triumphal chariot taken from the king of the Goths, drawn by stags, immediately followed by the conquering army, richly armed, crowned with laurel, and carrying palms in their hands. Never emperor arrived at such a height of glory. But how long lasted it? A short time after he was stabbed with poniards, having hardly time to take notice of his greatness, much less to enjoy it. By how many steps and strange ways did *Ælius Pertinax*, in his old age, climb to the imperial throne, and lost it before it was known in the empire, that he commanded it? He was the son of a slave, and first a merchant, by which he became a good accountant; then he studied grammar, and became a school-master; after that a lawyer, and having learned to defend causes, was made an advocate; but not prospering by these courses, he listed himself a soldier. Neither seemed he in that to thrive much better; for being arrived to the dignity of a centurion, he was cashiered with infamy. But he quitted it not so; for returning to the same trade, in process of time he became a senator; shortly after, consul; then president of Syria: at last, when he expected the hangman to take away his life, he was saluted emperor by those soldiers, who then came fresh from the slaughter of *Commodus*. They entering his house by night, he told them he was the man whom the tyrant had sent them to murder: but they presented him the sceptre and diadem, which he accepted, although then seventy years of age; and had scarce taken possession of the imperial seat, having only reigned three months, when he was cut in pieces, in a time he least suspected it; being

so beloved, esteemed, and praised by the Romans, that every one would have spent a thousand lives to have saved his; yet notwithstanding, a few soldiers passed publicly through the midst of the city, and, in the sight of all, stabbed an emperor so beloved and honored by the people, and returned back without any so much as questioning them, when those of one street (so few were the murderers) had been sufficient to have killed them with stones. Who sees not here the inconstancy and vanity of human things, as well in the life as unexpected death of this prince? By how many changes and windings did he climb to the top of the imperial greatness, and how suddenly, without any stop at all, was he tumbled headlong down! How long was his fortune in growing, and how quickly cut! Seventy years of a prosperous life, ended in the counterfeit felicity of three months, and the unhappy death of an hour. Then all is vanity of vanities, since that which costs so much, lasts so little, and death, in less than one hour, overthrows the fortune of seventy years.

SECTION II.

If the felicity of this life did only end when life ends, yet that were sufficient to undervalue it; but it often ends before it, and sometimes changes into disgraces and misfortunes, so as, with our own eyes, we often behold an end of our greatest fortunes. Let us not, therefore, trust in life, because it may fail, whilst the goods of it remain; and let us as little trust in them, because they may likewise fail, whilst it continues. Let this instability of things undeceive us, and let us seriously consider their vanity, in their manner of leaving us; which is excellently represented by St. John Chrysostom (Hom. in Eutrop. tom. 5.), in the eunuch Eutropius, patrician of Constantinople, consul and great chamberlain to the emperor Arcadius, who, withdrawing his privacy and favor from him, committed him to prison; on which the holy doctor reflects in this manner: "If at any time, now more than ever may be said, 'Vanity of vanities; all is vanity! Where is now the splendor of the consulate? where the lictors and their fasces? where the applauses, dances, banquets and revels? where the crowns and tapestry? where the noise of the city, and the flattering acclamations of the circus? All those things are perished; a boisterous wind has blown away the leaves, and left the naked tree tottering, and almost plucked up by the roots. Such was the violence of the storm, that when it had shaken all the nerves, it threatened utterly to overthrow the stock. Where are now those masking-friends, those healths and suppers? where that swarm of parasites, and that flood of wine poured out from morning till evening? where that exquisite and various artifice of cooks, those servants accustomed to say and do all that pleased?

All these were no more than a night's dream, which disappeared with the day; flowers which withered, when the spring was ended; a shadow they were, and so they passed; a smoke, and so they vanished; bubbles in the water, and so they burst; spiders' webs, and so were torn asunder. Wherefore, let us ever repeat this sentence, 'Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.' This saying ought to be written upon our walls, market-places, houses, streets, windows, gates, but principally in the conscience of every one; since the deceitful employments of this life and the enemies of truth have gained too much power and authority with many. This it is which one man ought to say to another; this it is we ought to say at dinner, at supper, and in all our conversation, 'Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.' Did I not daily tell thee, that riches were fleeting and deceitful? But thou wouldst not endure me. Did not I tell thee, they had the condition of a fugitive slave? But thou wouldst not believe me. See how experience has taught thee, that they are not only fugitive, but ungrateful and murdering, since they have cast thee into this exigence. But because this eunuch would neither be advised by the counsel of his domestics, nor strangers, do thou at least, who art puffed up with wealth and honors, make use of this calamity, and turn it to thy own profit. There is nothing more infirm than human things. By what name soever thou shalt express their baseness, thou shalt still fall short. Call them hay, smoke, a dream, flowers which wither; all is too little; they are so frail, that they are more nothing, than nothing itself. They are not only nothing, but are still in precipitation. Who was more exalted than this man? was he not famous for his wealth through the world? was he not mounted up to the height of all human honor? Did not all fear and reverence him? But behold him now more miserable than slaves and bondsmen; more indigent than those who beg their bread from door to door. There is no day, wherein is not set before his eyes swords drawn and sharpened to cut his throat; precipices, hangmen, and the street which leads to the gallows. Neither does he enjoy the memory of his past pleasures, nor the common light, but is at mid-day as in a dark night, penned up between four walls, deprived of the use of his eyes. But wherefore do I remember those things, since no words are able to express the fear of his mind, who every hour expects his punishment? To what end are my speeches, when the image of his calamity appears so evidently before thine eyes? Not long ago, the emperor having sent some soldiers to draw him out of the church, whither he was fled for sanctuary, he became as pale as box, and at this instant has no better color than one who were dead. To this add, that his teeth gnash against one another, his body quakes, his voice is broken with sobs, his tongue stammers; in conclusion, he stands like one whose soul were frozen for fear within him."

All this is from St. John Chrysostom. It is not needful to attend the end of this life, to see the imposture of it. It is enough to see the alterations whilst it lasts.

CHAPTER V.

The Baseness and Disorder of Temporal Things, and how great a Monster Men have made the World.

LET us now come to consider the baseness of all that which passes in time; which appeared so mean and poor to Marcus Aurelius, that he said, "Those things which fall under sense, which either allure us with delight, or deject us with grief, or glitter with outward pomp and appearance, how vile are they all! how worthy of contempt! how sordid and filthy! how subject to perish, and how dead!" Thus said that great emperor and monarch of the world, when the Roman empire was in its greatest power and lustre, and in the greatest experience of the goods of the earth, being more powerful and having more command of them than Solomon: and yet he not only says, they were vain, but vile, filthy, contemptible, and dead. That we may understand this better, let us look into the substance and being, which temporal things have of themselves, without respect either to the shortness of their duration, or to the variety of their changes, for which alone, although in themselves most precious, yet were they most despicable; but being so little, so vile, so disorderly, and, for the most part, so hurtful and prejudicial to us, although they were eternal, yet ought they to be contemned. We are not, therefore, only to look upon that littleness and poorness, which they have by nature, and from themselves, but upon the evil which they have acquired by our abuse. For the world, which of itself were tolerable, is by us made such, that it is not to be endured, even by those who best love it; and to those natural goods which it affords, our insatiable appetite has added such artificial fopperies of our own invention, that of both together we have composed a monster, no less horrible than that described by St. John in the Apocalypse: And, therefore, he that will see what worldly felicity is, let him cast his eyes upon that beast, which, for his unquietness and inconstancy, is said to rise out of the sea. He had the head and face of a lion, the body of a leopard, a beast various and spotted, and the feet of a bear; and, for his greater deformity, he had seven heads and ten horns. This is the lively image of that which passes in the world. For, as this monster is composed of three savage beasts; of a bear, which is carnal and luxurious, of a

leopard, whose skin is full of eyes; and of a lion, the proudest of all other beasts; so, in the world there is no other thing, as St. John says (Ep. 1. c. 2.), but the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life; that is, lust and exorbitancy in pleasures, covetousness and gaping after riches, ambition and desire of honors. Of those three monsters is composed the monster of monsters, which we call the world; which has also his seven heads and ten horns, to wit, the seven deadly sins by which are impugned the ten commandments, and the observation of the whole law of God.

Let us also consider the mysterious disposition of the parts of this beast. The feet are said to be of a bear, the body of a leopard, and the head of a lion; because all the inventions and additions, stratagems and designs of the world are founded upon the pleasures and delights of the appetite, which are natural; and upon this foundation our malice has built riches and honors, which are not natural, but human inventions. Riches are the body of the world, and upon them is raised pride, as the head of that body. Besides, riches are most conveniently placed in the middle, between pleasure and honors, as being necessary for the support of both, without which neither can be maintained. Avarice therefore forms the body of this beast, that it may equally nourish pleasure and ambition. Let us then propose to ourselves the image of this world, under the form of this monster and chimæra, as well to demonstrate the confusion and turmoil of it, as to signify to us, that the whole substance and being of it consist merely in the imagination and appearance. For such a monster, composed of the several parts of various beasts, which has no being or foundation in reason, but is only framed by the fancy, the philosophers call a chimæra; and such truly are the things of this world, inconstant, confused and troubled, and have no substance or being in themselves, but are only deceit and appearance. Some seem great, and are but little; others cozen us more, appear to be goods, and are really evils. To understand this better, and know the vanity of the world, we are to suppose that human malice has corrupted and poisoned it by inventing new delights and pleasures; to which we have added, by our imagination, what they wanted of being and reality; and by diverting things from those proper ends, for which they were ordained, have made them all vain, and the world a monster of many heads: for the head of all things is, as Philo says, the end, and the things of the world, having left their utmost and true end, which is one God, and confused themselves by the many ends of particular vices, have made that beast, which is said, not to have one, but many heads, which makes it so monstrous and deformed. Men follow not, in the use of things, their proper end, which is to please and serve God, but aim at the serving of their passions, and satisfying

their appetites; which, as they are various, so they have various ends and respects; from whence results the monstrosity of so many heads and faces. From the multitude then of ends, follows this deformity, which includes and is always accompanied with vanity. For the world, following this vanity of adulterate ends, contrary to reason and nature, leaves the true and lawful end, which is the service of God; and that which leaves its proper end, becomes useless and vain. If you would blind the eyes of some excellent marksman, his art and skill were lost, and his bow would become unprofitable, because he remained deprived of that, by which he was to attain his end. So all things being created to this end, that man by them might serve God, this end wanting, they become vain and useless. By this example may be clearly seen, how vain is the world, since it does not direct those things it enjoys, for the service of the universal Creator, but for other vain and imaginary ends, by which it becomes wholly itself a vanity. The multitude of gold, silver, plate, jewels, precious furniture, and other ornaments which we glory in, are they perhaps for the service of God? Let St. Alexius tell us, whether he chose them as means to that end; and if they be not for the service of the Lord of all, what are they all but vanity? Abundance of delights, masks, dances, feasts, entertainments, are they perhaps to please God? Let St. Bruno tell us; and if they be not for that purpose, what are they all but vanity? Majesty, ostentation of titles and honors, are they perhaps for the service of God? Let St. Josaphat tell us, who fled from his temporal kingdom, that he might better apply himself to the service of the King of heaven. Vain is all the greatness of the earth, if that of heaven be not gained by it. The most precious thing failing, which is the right end, all besides becomes vain, frivolous and of no esteem.

SECTION II.

This deviation and wandering of worldly things, from their proper and due end, is sufficient to declare their vanity and disorder. But there is yet another error in them, which makes them appear much more vain, which is, that they not only go astray from their first and great end, which is the service of God, but also fail, and hold no proportion with that second end, which human vices propose to them here. That which our appetite pretends in riches, pomp and honors, which it has invented, is the felicity of this life; and to that they are so little proper, as they have rather disposed things for our misery and torment; and therefore vain are all our fancies and inventions. To maintain and uphold our honor, what laws, rights and irregular customs has the world invented, to the great danger of our lives, and the hinderance of our pleasures! It has made honor so brittle, that,

with one word, whosoever wishes may take it from us, which is the occasion that many live dishonored; and if they will recover it, it must cost their lives, fortunes or quiet. What greater madness than that the thing, which they have made of the greatest esteem in the world, should be subject to such an inconvenience, and of so unhappy a condition, that it is very easy to lose, and most difficult to regain; that any one may bereave us of it, and he who has taken it from us, cannot restore it; that it is in another man's hand to destroy it, and not in our own to repair it? What law in the world more unjust, that if an infamous person give thee the lie, thou remainest dishonored, although he lied that gave it; and that honor, which hereby one word has taken from thee, thou canst not recover by another? What greater folly than to fight for honor, and maintain truth by quarrelling, as if he were the most honorable person, and spoke the truest, who was the strongest, especially being so prejudicial to the most virtuous? For it commonly happens, that those who have the clearest wits, the noblest souls, and the most constant and sound judgments, have the weakest bodies. Finally, in this matter of honor, men have invented such laws, such punctilios, such impertinent formalities, that if they were all truly and really mad, they could not have done more absurdly. For what is madness, but to do things without proportion, order or reason? which, since the world does, we must conclude it vain, senseless and foolish.

Coming then to riches, which were invented for the ease and commodity of life, human malice has made them such, as they were for our greater trouble and vexation. For he that is rich, will not only be rich himself, but must have all he has so too. He is not content with having a good garment, unless his walls be hung with curious pictures, rich tapestries, precious cabinets, and other rarities, better clad than himself, which serve not for warmth or use, but only for show and appearance. From whence it happens, that he who has most wealth, has most want, because he not only needs for himself, but for all that he possesses: so that he who has a great house, has the same necessities as his house, which are many; for a great house requires much furniture, and a large family, and so charges the master with multitudes of servants, great quantities of plate, hangings, and other ornaments, superfluous for use, and human convenience; insomuch, as none are more poor than the rich, because they want not only for themselves, but for all that is theirs. At least, riches want not this inconvenience, that although they were invented for human use and ease, yet he that has them in the greatest abundance, has the greatest cares, troubles, envies, dangers, and the greatest losses.

The same disorder and abuse happen in various other particulars, which at first were invented for a comfort and remedy of

our wants, but are now become a burden and trouble to us. Our garments, which were for necessity, are now worn for ornament, and using them for other ends than they were designed, they become our vexations. A girdle or a shoe too much straightened, afflicts the body, and hinders us in divers actions; gold chains, and other needless ornaments, burden us. Wherefore St. Ambrose says (Ambros. l. i. de Virgin.), "A weighty chain of gold about the neck, or stumbling shoes upon the feet, serve as a punishment to women, as if they were some great offenders; for in respect of the pain and weight, with which they grieve those who wear them, what matters it whether they be of gold or iron? both equally oppress their necks and hinder their going. The price and value of the gold eases nothing; nay, rather adds to their trouble, in respect of the fear they live in, lest they should lose them, or that some should, against their wills, free them of their pain and trouble. According to this, it little imports whether the pain be inflicted by our own sentence (as the women in this case pass it against themselves), or by the award of others, as against offenders. Only women are in this in the more miserable condition, since others desired to be freed, and eased of their fetters and imprisonment, and they, on the contrary, desire still to be subject and tied to theirs. This from St. Ambrose. Our food also, which is given by nature, for the sustenance of our lives, human malice has, by the invention of new dainties, and various ways of cookery to please the palate, made destructive both to life and taste; those new infirmities and sharp griefs, whereof the world is full, being occasioned, as the physicians affirm, by our disorderly diet, and multiplicity of new devised dishes. Hector Boetius, in his second book of the history of the Scots, says, "Our ancestors knew not those several sorts of infirmities, which we see in our age: anciently scarce any fell sick but of the stone, abundance of phlegm, or some other infirmity proceeding from cold or moisture: they lived well, and their spare diet preserved their bodies from diseases, and enlarged their lives for many years. But now of late, since we have forsaken our country food, and given ourselves to the curious feeding of other nations, strange diseases have entered with strange dishes." And in his ninth book he says, that they knew not plagues, nor sharp and violent fevers, so long as they preserved their ancient diet.

This separation and wandering of worldly things from their principal and chief end, which is God, causes such a distance between them and reason, and therefore they become a monster; and so St. John very fitly paints the world in the figure of this monster, with seven heads of beasts, and none of a man. For if that man were monstrous, who had no human head, but seven of brutish creatures, no less monstrous is the world, which wants the natural end and head, which is God, whom it ought to seek ac-

cording to reason, and not pursue those false and adulterate ends, which are contrary to it. The world wants the head of a man, because it does not order itself according to the end of reason ; and it retains the heads of beasts, because it is guided by passion, appetite and the like, which are the ends of beasts. If we shall then behold the great vanity of things, together with the multitude of vices, wherein men have involved them, and daily make them worse, to whom can this beast, irritated with so many sharp goads, as are our sins, be tolerable ? What injustice is not committed ? what flattery not insinuated ? what cozenage not attempted ? and what revenge not executed ? Avarice disquiets all, luxury corrupts it, and ambition treads it under foot.

From what is said it follows, that the things of this world, represented to us by St. John, under the figure of those three fierce and cruel beasts, are, according to our disorderly manner of using them, very prejudicial and hurtful, both to our souls and bodies. And if we should behold them, as they lie hidden under that appearance of pleasure, which they feign and counterfeit, we should be affrighted, as if we had seen lions or tigers, which would tear us in pieces, or serpents, which would sting and poison us. And the like to that which was done by the servant of God, Volcon (Zon. to. 13. ex Othone), would happen to us. This man was a holy priest, and very zealous and desirous to draw a certain rich man to the service of God. He took his occasion, by coming one day to dinner to him, and entering the house, he said, "Sir, what have we to eat ?" The rich man replied, "Trouble not yourself, you shall eat the best the town affords." The holy man went straight to the kitchen, accompanied with many others, who followed him, and calling the cook, commanded him to bring forth those dishes which were provided. An admirable thing. No sooner were they brought in and uncovered, but the capons, pheasants, peacocks, and other dainties, turned into toads and serpents ; at which the rich man remained amazed, and was taught that to give himself over to gluttony, and the immoderate pleasure of his taste, was no less hurtful for him, than to feed on poisonous creatures, or to have to do with lions, serpents and tigers. And it is certain, that lions, and the most furious beasts, have not killed so many as have died by surfeits, and pleasing too much their palates.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Littleness of Things Temporal.

SETTING aside how vain the things of this world are, let us particularly consider how little they are, and we shall perceive, that though their vanity, which swells and blows them up, seems to extend them, yet they are in themselves poor, short and little, especially if we compare them with things eternal. Beginning, therefore, with that temporal good, which seems to have the greatest bulk, and makes the greatest noise, to wit, honor, fame and renown, we shall see how narrow it is. Men desire that their fame should ring through the whole world, and that all should know their names; and if they did, what are all in respect of those in the other world, since the whole earth, in respect of the heavens, is but a point? But who is he that can be known by all who live? Millions of men there are in the world, who know not whether there be an emperor of Germany, or a king of Spain. Let no man then afflict himself for this vain honor; for even in his own country, all shall not know him. Many thousand years are past, and no man knew thee, and of those who shall be born hereafter, few shall remember thee; and although thou remainest in the memory of those, yet they also in the end must die, and with them thine, and their own memory must perish, and thou shalt, as before thou wert, continue a whole eternity without being known, or celebrated by any. And even now, whilst thou livest, there are not many who know thee; and of those, most of them so bad, that thou oughtest to be ashamed that such mouths shall praise thee, who speak ill even of one another. Wherefore then dost thou torment thyself for a thing so short, so vile, and so vain? All these things are so certain, that even the gentiles acknowledge them. Hear only one, who was placed in the highest degree of glory and dignity in the whole world, since he was lord of it, the emperor Marcus Antoninus (Mar. Anton. l. 3. p. 200.), who speaks in this manner: "Perhaps thou art solicitous of honor. Behold how quickly oblivion blots out all things. Behold a chaos of eternity both before and after. How vain is the noise of fame? how great the inconstancy and uncertainty of human judgments and opinions? in how narrow a compass are all things enclosed? The world is but a point, and of it how small a corner is inhabited, and who, and how many are those in it, who are to praise thee?" And a little after he adds: "He who desires fame and honor after death, thinks not that he, who is to remember him, shall shortly die also, and in the same manner, he who is to succeed after him, until all that memory, which is to be propagated by mortal men, be blotted out. But suppose that those, who are

to remember thee, were immortal, what could it import thee, being dead? nay, even alive, what could it profit thee to be praised? All that is fair, is fair of itself, and is perfect within itself, and to be praised is no part of the beauty. He therefore who is celebrated, is, for that reason, neither better nor worse." These antidotes are drawn by the pagan prince, against the poison of ambition. Why therefore should we Christians esteem any honor, but that of God?

What shall I say of the vanity of those titles, which many have assumed against all reason and justice, only to make themselves known in the world? Let us judge how it will fare with us of Europe, by those who have taken titles upon them in Asia. For if the fame of those in Asia arrive not to the knowledge of us in Europe, no more shall ours in Europe to theirs in Asia. The name of Echebar (Jarricus in Thesau. Indic.) was thought by his subjects to be eternal, and that all the world did not only know, but fear him. But ask here in Europe who he was, and no man has heard of him; and demand now of the most learned, and a few shall resolve you, unless perchance he find here in my writing, that he was the great Mogul. How few have heard of the name of Vencatapadino Ragiu? He imagined that there was no man in the world but knew him, "The lord of kings, and supreme emperor." The titles which he arrogated to himself, and put in his edicts, were these: "The spouse of good fortune, king of great provinces, king of the greatest kings, and god of kings, lord of all the horsemen, master of those who cannot speak, emperor of three emperors, conqueror of all he sees, and preserver of all he conquers, formidable to the eight regions of the world, lord of the provinces which he overcomes, destroyer of the Mahometan armies, disposer of the riches of Zeilan, he who cut off the head of the invincible Viravalano, lord of the East, South, North and West, and of the sea, hunter of elephants, he who lives and glories in his military valor. These titles of honors are enjoyed by the most excellent in warlike forces, Vencatapadino Ragiu, who rules and governs this world." How many can tell me, before I declare it here, that he was the king of Narsinga? If then these warlike and potent princes are not known in Europe, no more shall Charles V., and the great captain, and many other excellent men in arms and literature, who have flourished in these parts, be known in Asia and Africa.

If we shall reflect upon the truth of those titles, which many arrogate to themselves, we shall perceive them all to be vain. How many are called Highness and Excellence, who are of a base and abject spirit, and continue in mortal sin, which is the meanest and lowest thing in the world! How many are called Most Serene, who have their understanding darkened, and their will perverted! Others call themselves Most Magnificent, with as

much reason as Nero might be called Most Clement. This vanity has proceeded so far, that men have not feared to usurp those titles which only belong to God, and have thereupon raised great wars and slain innumerable people. Wherefore St. John said, that the beast which rose out of the sea, had upon his head names of blasphemy; and afterwards, that the purple beast was full of names of blasphemy, in regard of the blood that has been spilt in the world for those vain titles, and some of them contrary to the essence of God, as the calling of Rome eternal, and deifying her emperor, which was no better than blasphemy. The things wherein we have placed honor make it most ridiculous. Some think they should be valued and esteemed because they are strong; not remembering that a bear, a bull, or a sumpter-mule are stronger than they. Some, because they are richly clad, become proud and puffed up, not being ashamed to be more esteemed for the work of a mechanic tailor, than for their virtuous actions. Others think to be honored for their dishonors, bragging of their vices, murders and impurities. Others boast of the nobility of their blood, without looking upon virtue, and so make that a vice, which was to oblige them to noble actions, converting that which was to be their honor into infamy, valuing themselves more for being noble, than being Christians. A man is no greater than what he is in the eyes of God; and the estimation which God has of us, is not for being born in a palace, but for being re-born in the waters of baptism. What comparison is there between being born of noble lineage, and being born from the side of Jesus Christ? The penitent virgin Donna Sancha Corillo (Ro. in ejus vita, lib. 2. c. 1.), so often as she assisted at baptisms, beheld Christ upon the cross, with his side open, and the child issuing forth: giving us to understand the new birth we receive from the blood of Christ in our Christianity, for which God esteems men more than for being born of sinful blood. This birth is of dishonor, that of honor; this of sin, that of holiness; this is of the flesh which kills, that of the spirit which quickeneth; by this we are the sons of men, by that of God; by the birth of the flesh, we are heirs of our fathers' fortunes, but much more of their miseries, for we are born sinners; by the birth of baptism, we are the heirs of heaven, and for the present, we receive grace, and for the future, glory. What an error is it then to value ourselves more for our human birth, by which we are made sinners, than for our divine birth, by which we are made just! How foolish were he, who being the son of a king and a bondswoman, should esteem himself more for being the son of a slave than of a monarch! More fool is he who values more the nobility of his blood, in being a gentleman, than the nobility of his soul in being a Christian. Finally, all honors of the earth are but such, as Mathathias told his sons, "dung and corruption." St.

Anselm compares those who seek after honors, to boys who hunt after butterflies; Isaias to spiders, which disembowel themselves in framing a web, which is broken by the flies. Yet for all this poorness and baseness of honors, many souls have perished by them. If David cursed the mountains of Gelboe, because Saul and Jonathan died upon them, with much more reason may we curse the high mountains of honor, upon which so many souls have been seen to perish.

SECTION II.

Let us now consider what riches are, to which St. Gregory Nazianzen did much honor, when he called them a precious dung. Truly, in themselves they are not much better. Gold and silver, said Antoninus (*In vita sua*, c. 9.), the philosopher, were nothing else than dregs of the earth; that precious marbles were as corns and pains in the feet; and generally he says of the matter of all these things, that they are nothing but dust and corruption. Plotinus said, that gold was nothing else but a vicious water others, that it was yellow earth. What are precious stones, but shining pebbles, some red, some green, &c.? silk, but the slavering of worms? the finest and purest linens, but threads of certain plants? Other webs of esteem are made of the hair of beasts; whereof if we should meet one in our meat, would make us loathe it; and many in their clothes are proud of them. Curious furs, what are they but the skins of contemptible vermin? amber, but the uncleanness of a whale, or something that the sea purges from it, as not worthy to be preserved? musk, but the putrefied and congealed blood of a poor beast? What are possessions, palaces, cities, provinces, and spacious kingdoms? They are indeed only toys of men, who, though old, are but children in esteeming them so much: and this I say, not comparing them with things eternal. Lucian (*Lucian. in Icaromenip.*), beholding them not from the empyreal heaven, but from the sphere of the moon, said, that all Greece possessed not above four fingers' breadth, and that the Peloponnesus was not bigger than a lentil seed. To Seneca the whole compass of the earth seemed but a point; and all the greatness there, only a matter of sport. St. Chrysostom (*Hom. 24. in Mat.*), more seriously looking upon the so much esteemed greatness of this world, the splendid palaces, renowned cities, large kingdoms, compares them to those little houses of sand or dirt, made by children for their entertainment; which men stand by and laugh at, and oftentimes, if their parents or masters find that it hinders them from learning their lessons, they strike them down with their feet, and destroy that in a moment, which has cost the boys much time and labor. So God uses to deal with those, who, neglecting his service, employ themselves in scraping together riches, enlarging their possessions,

building palaces, strong forts, and walled towns, which he destroys with that ease, as if they were those little houses of sand made by children. And, certainly, more children are they, who set their hearts upon the greatness of this short life, than those who busy themselves with walls of dirt. This is from St. John Chrysostom; who, in another place (Hom. 14. de Avaritia) says: That if looking upon a picture, where we behold painted a rich and powerful man, and a poor and contemptible beggar, we neither envy the one, nor despise the other, because we know them to be shadows and no truth; the same judgment we ought to make of the things themselves; for all, according to Scripture, are little more than nothing. And as in a comedy or farce, it imports little who plays Alexander, and who the beggar, since all are equal when the play is done; so are all after death. If Herod offered to a dancing girl, because she pleased him, the half of his kingdom, what was the whole worth? And Aman, who possessed great wealth, confessed he valued them as nothing, so long as Mardocheus did not reverence him.

The pleasures of our palate (if we consider them), what more vile and nasty? A capon, a hen, or a duck, which are the ordinary food of rich men, if we but observe their feeding, nothing would be more loathsome. If, in your cooking, you should fling into the pot worms, grubs, and other such stuff, nobody I believe would eat of it; and what is a hen, but a vessel filled with such uncleanness? Other meats, which are most coveted by our sensual gluttons, if they should behold by what they are nourished, would cause a loathing. The lamprey, which was the delicacy of the Romans, feeds but upon mud and sludge. There is no meat more neat and clean than bread, herbs and water, the food of penitents.

How narrow is the sphere of our pleasures, which, besides the short time that they endure, are mingled with wormwood of many pains and griefs, which accompany, precede and follow them! The adulterer, how many troubles and dangers does he usually pass, before he compasses his desire! in the enjoying, what fears and suspicions assault him! and when it is past (if he thinks seriously of the sin), what remorse and repentance afflict him! and oftentimes how many long diseases and sharp pains succeed that which lasted but a moment! Let us compare our pleasures with the pains that follow them, and we shall find these far to surpass the others. The several sorts of pleasure, whereof the touch is capable, exceed not two or three; but the distinct sorts of pains which afflict it, are without number: The pain of the sciatica, the stone, the gout, the toothache, the headache, besides innumerable other diseases and violences, most intense and horrible, which follow the tortures invented by tyrants. The greatest pleasure of the sense holds no comparison with the grief en-

duced by the separation of a member, or the pain suffered by him who has the gout, sciatica, or some violent disease in extremity.

SECTION III.

Well may be seen the poverty and insufficiency of the pleasures of this life, in that our appetites still strive to enlarge them, by inventing new and artificial entertainments, which, by their multitude, may supply the defects of those which are natural. Well may appear the irksome weariness of this life by all our endeavors, which aim at nothing more than to give it some ease and relief. How many kinds of curious stuffs have been woven to please us in our garments? what diversity of easy beds and couches have been found out? what close chairs, litters and coaches have, with excessive cost and charges, been invented? and the invention of them is no sooner known, but we pursue it with that pride and haste, that they esteem themselves unhappy who enjoy them last, although their use be no ways necessary. The bishop of Pampeluna (Fra. Pruden. de Sandoval, Hist. de Car. 5. P. 28. l. 2. Sec. 36.), historiographer to Charles the Fifth, writes, that in the year 1546, there were no coaches in Spain; and that much about the same time, one being brought thither for the emperor's own person, whole cities ran out to see it, and admired it, as if it had been a centaur, or some monster. And now what more frequent? The invention, because easy, was so pleasing, that in a few years, people of very ordinary condition began to use them; insomuch, that it was thought fit, within a very short time after, to prohibit them; which is more to be admired, in respect of the simple and homely way which, a little before, was used by the most eminent persons. They write of the duke of Medina Sidonia, who, for wealth and nobility, is one of the greatest in Spain, that when he and the duchess went to visit our Lady's de Regla, a church of great devotion in Andalusia, they went in a cart drawn by oxen, which was in the year 1540. Shortly after, within five or six years, came the coach into Spain which we have spoken of, and within nine or ten years, there was such a multitude of them, that by a public edict, in the year 1577, all coaches with two horses were forbidden, because many of inferior condition used them, both to the destruction of many serviceable horses, and to the prejudice of their own wealth and modesty. With such haste does our human appetite run after what it conceives commodious, piercing out with art that which seemed short in nature. The same happened, as Dio Cassius reports, with litters, which were brought into Rome in the time of Julius Cæsar; but quickly, as Suetonius reports, it was necessary for the same Julius Cæsar to forbid them.

The same has, and does pass in costly apparel, which is so

equal a disorder, that Tully doubts, whether it is more indecent for the nature of man, the use of coaches, or the curiosity of garments, and calls them both impudent and shameless; and truly, as they are used by many, they are no less. The same Cicero said, that the Roman soldiers counted their arms, as the members of their bodies, because they were no less troubled with the loss of the one than the other. The same account many make of their neat and curious garments; and are no less sensible if their clothes chance to be disordered, than if they had a member broken or out of joint. Macrobius writes of Quintus Hortensius, a Roman senator, that he was so curious in ordering his garments by a large looking-glass made on purpose, and disposing the plaits of his gown, which he gathered after in a quaint knot, after the Roman fashion, that being consul, and going into the forum in all this nice formality, accompanied with his colleague, it happened that in a great press and crowd of people, his fellow-consul chanced to disorder a little the plaits of his gown; which he took so heinously, that he commenced an action of offence against him, which the Romans called *de injuria*, as if he had broken his arm, or some other member. What shall I say of ornaments, so costly and foolish, that even the world itself seems to condemn them, in regard, that being now glutted with the garnitures of silk and gold, it begins to make embroideries of straw? as if it had already learned and understood, that for the use of garments, it is one and the same thing to adorn them with straw, as with gold and silver; and for this reason, laces and points made of straw, are made use of in place of gold and silver.

But after the various inventions of apparel, who can reckon the several ways invented to please our senses? The mixture of several meats for the taste; the confection of sweet pastes and perfumes for the smell; the melodious music of divers instruments for the hearing; the games, pictures and shows for the sight; which entertainments have been exhibited even with the spilling of human blood. Witness the gladiators of Rome, and the bull-fights of Spain. All this variety of pleasures, which the appetite has invented, is an evident sign of the poverty and insufficiency of nature, since all this multitude of artificial contents does not satisfy it, nor in any sort equal our natural griefs.

For so slight a matter is lost a thing so great, as is eternity. For these we abolish the law of God in our hearts, and displease our Redeemer, who would reward the contempt of these poor and transitory pleasures of the earth, with great and special favors from heaven. If we will not therefore despise them for what they are in themselves, let us at least mortify our affections for what is promised us hereafter, and because it is most agreeable to God, and profitable for ourselves; as may appear by this story related by Glycas. (Glycas, et ex eo Rad. in Aula Sancta, cap.

12.) A certain anchorite had lived forty years in the desert, retired wholly from the world, and applying himself with great observance of his profession, to the salvation of his soul. A desire at last entered into his mind, to know who in the world was equal to himself in mortification. Whereupon he besought God to reveal it to him; and it pleased his Divine Majesty to grant his request, and it was answered him from heaven, that the emperor Theodosius, notwithstanding that he was master of the greatest glory of the world, yet was neither inferior to him in humility, nor in overcoming himself. The hermit with this answer moved by God, repaired to the court, where he found easy access to the courteous and religious emperor, to whom the servants of God, and such as were famous for sanctity of life, were always welcome. Not long after he found means to speak to him, and know his holy exercises. At first he only acquainted him with common virtues, that he gave large alms, that he wore hair-cloth, that he fasted often, that he observed conjugal chastity, and that he caused justice to be exactly observed. These virtues seemed well to the hermit, especially in such a person; but yet he judged all this to be short of himself, who had done those things with greater perfection; for he had renounced all, and given all he possessed for Christ, which was more than to give alms; he never knew woman in his life, which was more than to observe conjugal chastity; he never did injury or injustice to any, which was more than to cause justice to be kept to others; his hair-cloth and fasts from all sorts of dainties were continual, which was more than to abstain some days from flesh. Wherefore, altogether unsatisfied, he further importuned the emperor, beseeching him to conceal nothing from him; that it was the divine will that he should acquaint him with what he did, and that therefore he was sent to him from God. The emperor thus urged, said to him, "Know then, that when I assist at the horse courses and spectacles in the circus, where my presence is required, I so withdraw my mind from those vanities, that, though my eyes be open, I see them not." The hermit remained astonished at so particular a mortification in so great an emperor, and perceived, that sceptres and purple could not hinder a devout prince from mortification of his affections, and meriting much with God Almighty. Theodosius further added, "Know also, that I sustain myself by my labor; for I transcribe certain parchments into a fair hand, which being sold, the price pays for my food." With this example of poverty amongst so much riches, and temperance in the midst of so great dainties, the hermit was wholly amazed, and learned, that abstinence from ease and pleasures of this life was that which made this religious prince so gracious and acceptable to our Lord. Finally, so perverse are the delights of the world,

that though lawful, yet they hinder much our spiritual proficiency, and if unlawful, are the total ruin of our souls.

SECTION IV.

What shall we then say of the royal and imperial dignity which seems, in human judgment, to embrace all the happiness of the world? Honors, riches and pleasures, all are contained in it. But how small is a kingdom, since the whole earth, in respect of the heavens, is no bigger than a point? And certainly, neither honors, riches nor pleasures are greater or more secure than we have described them. Let us hear St. Chrysostom speak of the emperor of his time. (Hom. 66. ad Pop.) "Look not upon the crown, (says he,) but upon that tempest of cares which accompany it. Fix not thy eyes upon the purple, but upon the mind of the king, more sad and dark than the purple itself. The diadem does not more encompass his head, than cares and suspicions his soul. Look not at the squadrons of his guard, but at the armies of molestations which attend him; for nothing can be so full of cares as the palaces of kings. Every day they expect not one death, but many; nor can it be said, how often in the night their hearts tremble with some sudden fright, and their souls almost seem to forsake their bodies, and this in the time of peace. But when a war is kindled, what life so miserable as theirs? how many dangers happen to them, even from their friends and subjects? The floor of the royal palace is drowned in the blood of their kindred. If I shall mention those which have happened heretofore and now of late, thou wilt easily know them. This suspecting his wife, tied her naked in the mountains, and left her to be devoured by wild beasts, after she had been a mother of several kings. What a life had that man! it being impossible he should execute such a revenge, unless his sick heart had been eaten and consumed with jealousy. This put to death his only son. This killed himself, being taken by the tyrant. This murdered his nephew, after he had made him his companion in the empire. This, his brother, who died by poison; and his innocent son ended his life only for what he might have been. Of those princes which followed, one of them was, with his slaves and chariots, miserably burned alive; and it is not possible for words to express the calamities which he was forced to endure. And he, who now reigns, has he not, since he was crowned, suffered many troubles, dangers, griefs and treasons? But in heaven it is not so." After this manner St. Chrysostom paints forth the greatest fortune of the world, the imperial majesty, which must needs be little, since it is so unhappy, that it suffers not to enjoy those frail goods of the earth in security, but makes the possessors oftentimes perish before them. But it is far other-

wise in heaven, the palace and house of God; where the just, without mixture or counterpoise of misery, are to enjoy those goods eternal, as we shall see in its proper place.

Lastly, let us learn from hence, not to admire the greatness of this world, nor to desire the benefit of it; which lesson was well taught by St. Spiridion to his disciple, who accompanying him one time to the court of the emperor, suffered himself to be transported with what he beheld. The greatness and lustre of the court, the rich garments, jewels, pearls and precious stones, dazzled the eyes of the raw and inexperienced youth; but above all, the sight of the emperor seated on his imperial throne, with so much splendor and greatness, almost drew him beside himself. St. Spiridion, willing one day to correct his error, asked him, (as if he had not known it,) which of those was the emperor? His disciple, not reaching his intention, pointing with his finger, simply told him, that was he. "And wherefore (replied the saint) is this man more to be esteemed than the rest? Is it, perhaps, because he is more virtuous? or is it because he is adorned with more exterior lustre and splendor? Is not he likewise to die, as well as the most poor and unknown beggar? is he not to be buried? is he not, as well as the rest of men, to appear before the just Judge? Wherefore dost thou admire that which has no consistence? It were better for thee to place thy eyes and heart upon things eternal and incorruptible, and to be enamored of those, which are not subject to change and death."

The same disciple of Spiridion, being now bishop, travelled one time with his master, who was then also archbishop of Trimethunte; and as they came to a certain place, where the fields were very fertile and pleasant, the disciple being much taken with them, began to cast within himself, how he might compass an inheritance in that good country, and lay it to his church. The saint, who understood his thoughts, gave him this sweet and gentle reprehension. To what purpose, dear brother, dost thou trouble thy thoughts with things so vain and of so little substance? Wherefore dost thou desire land and vineyards to labor and cultivate? Dost thou not know, that these things are only of an outward appearance, and within are nothing, or at least are worth nothing? We have an inheritance in heaven, which none can take from us; there we have a house not made by the hands of men. Look after those goods, and begin now, even before the time, by the virtue of hope to enjoy them. Those goods are of that condition, that if you once possess them, and make yourself lord of them, you shall then be their eternal heir, and your inheritance shall never pass to others. Let one place himself in the point of death, and let him from thence, on the one part, behold the littleness of all things temporal, which are now past, and on the other, the greatness of eternity, whereinto

he enters, which shall never pass, and he shall easily discover, how all the greatness and commodities of this life are, for their littleness and short endurance, rather worthy of laughter, than admiration.

CHAPTER VII.

How miserable a Thing is this Temporal Life.

LET us also consider more particularly the substance and bulk of human life, which we so much esteem, and we shall not a little wonder how so many and so great misfortunes can happen in so short a space. Whereupon Phalaris, the Agregentine, was used to say, that if a man, before he was born, knew what he was to suffer in life, he would not be born at all. For this reason some philosophers, repenting that they lived, would blaspheme nature, railing at it with a thousand complaints and injuries, because, to the best of living things, it had given so bad and wretched a life: not reaching so high, as to know, that this was an effect of the fault of man, and not a fault of nature or divine providence. Pliny would say, That nature was but a step-mother to mankind; and Silenus being asked, what was the greatest happiness man was capable of, said, "Not to be born, or to die quickly." The great philosopher and emperor, Marcus Aurelius (Aurel. Anton. in vita sua), considering human misery, spoke in this discreet manner: "The war of this life is dangerous, and the end and issue of it so terrible and dreadful, that I am certain, that if any of the ancients should rise again, and recount to us faithfully, and give us a view of his life past, from the time he came out of his mother's womb, to his last gasp, the body relating at large the pains and griefs it had suffered, and the heart the alarms it had received from fortune, that all men would be amazed at a body, that had endured so much, and at a heart, that had gained so great a victory; and dissembled it. I here confess freely, and although to my shame, yet for the profit that may redound to future ages, that in the space of fifty years, which I have lived, I have desired to prove the utmost of all the vices and excesses of this life, to see if the malice of man had any bounds and limits; and I find, after long and serious inquisition, that the more I eat, the more is my hunger; and the more I drink, the greater is my thirst; if I sleep much, the more is my desire to sleep; the more I rest, the more weary and indisposed I find myself; the more I have, the more I covet, and the more I grasp, the less I hold. Finally, I attain to nothing, which does not surfeit and cloy me, and then presently I abhor it, and desire something else." This is the judgment of philosophers,

concerning the miseries of man's life. The same is that of the wise man, when he says, "All the days of man are full of grief and misery; neither do his thoughts rest at night." With reason did Democritus say (Stob. ser. 96.), that the life of man was most miserable, since those who seek for good, hardly find it, and evil comes of itself, and enters our gates unsought for; insomuch as our life is always exposed to innumerable dangers, injuries, losses, and so many infirmities, that according to Pliny, and many physicians, Greeks, and Arabians, there were more than thirty several sorts of new diseases discovered in the space of a few years; and now every day they find out others, and some so cruel, that they are not to be named without horror. Neither speak I only of the infirmities, but of their remedies. For even diseases, known and common, are cured by cauterizing with fire, by sawing off a member, by trepanning the skull, or drawing bones from it. Some have been cured by opening the belly, and drawing forth the entrails. Others are prescribed to eat snakes, mice, worms, and other loathsome vermin. But above all, the cure of Palæologus II., emperor of Constantinople, was most cruel and extravagant; whose infirmity, after a year's continuance, found no other remedy, but to be continually vexed and displeased; his wife and servants, who most desired his health, having no ways to restore it, but by disobedience, still crossing and opposing him in what he most desired: a harsh cure for a prince! If remedies be so great evils, what are the infirmities? The sickness of Angeleus Politianus was so vehement, that he knocked his head against the walls: that of Mæcenas so strange, that he slept not, nor closed his eyes in three whole years: that of Antiochus so pestilential, that his loathsome smell infected his whole army, and his body (as has been said) flowed with vermin. Consider here the end of majesty, when the greatest power of the earth cannot defend itself against so noisome and so contemptible an enemy. In the same manner Feretrina, queen of the Barcæans, all the flesh of her body turned into maggots and grubs, that swarming every where, at last consumed her. Some have had serpents bred in their arms and thighs, which have devoured their flesh, even whilst they lived. With reason then does man enter into the world with tears, as divining the many miseries which he shall have time enough to suffer, but not to lament, and therefore begins to weep so early.

SECTION II.

Strange Pestilences.

WHAT shall I say of those strange pestilential infirmities which have destroyed whole cities and provinces? Many authors

write, that in Constantinople there happened so strange a plague, that those who were infected with it, thought they were killed by their next neighbors; and falling into this frenzy, died raging with fear and imagination that they were murdered by their friends. In the time of Heraclius, there was so mortal a pestilence in Romania, that in a few days many thousands died, and the greater part of those who were struck, flung themselves into the river to assuage that excessive heat, which like a fire burned their entrails. Thucydides, a Greek author, writes, that in his time there was such a corruption of the air, that an infinity of people died, and no remedy could be found to mitigate that disaster; and what was most strange, if any by good hap, recovered, they remained without any memory of what was past, insomuch, that fathers forgot their sons, and husbands their wives. Marcus Aurelius, an author worthy of credit, speaks of a plague in his time, so great in Italy, that it was easier to number the living than the dead. The soldiers of Avidius Cassius being in Seleucia, a city within the territories of Babylon, entered the temple of Apollo, and finding there a coffer, which they imagined might contain some treasure, opened it, from whence issued so pestilential and corrupted an air, that it infected the whole region of Babylon, and from thence passed into Greece, and so to Rome, still corrupting the air as it went; insomuch, that the third part of mankind remained not alive.

The calamities of the times nearer ours, have been no less. For, as our sins decrease not, so the justice of God in punishing us slacks not. A year after Francis, king of France, was married to Leonora of Austria, there reigned in Germany a strange infirmity; those who were infected with it, sweating forth a pestilential humor, died within four-and-twenty hours. It began in the West, but passing afterwards into Germany, it raged with such fury, as if it meant to extirpate all mankind; for before any remedy could be found, there died so many thousands of people, that many towns and provinces remained desert. Such was the putrefaction of the air, that it left almost nothing alive; and those few that remained, in sign of penance, and to avert the wrath of God, went signed with red crosses. They write, that it was so violent in England, that not only men died, but birds left their nests, their eggs, and young ones; the wild beasts quitted their dens, and snakes and moles were seen to go in companies and troops, not being able to endure the poison, enclosed in the bowels of the earth; and many creatures were found in heaps dead under trees, their bodies disfigured with sores. In the year 1546, the last of May, began in Stix, a city of Provence, a most mortal pestilence, which lasted nine months; in which died an infinite number of people of all ages; insomuch, that the church-yards were so full of dead bodies, that there was no room left to bury

others. The greatest part of those who were infected, the second day became frantic, and flung themselves out of windows, or into wells; others fell into a flux of blood at the nose, which if they staunched, they instantly died. The evil was so great, that fathers forsook their children, and women their husbands; riches did not preserve them from dying of hunger, a cup of water being not sometimes to be had for money. If they found by chance what to eat, the fury of the sickness was such, that they often died with the morsel in their mouths. The contagion became so great, that many took it by being only looked upon; and the air of the city was so corrupted by the grievous heat of this pestilential evil, that wheresoever the steam of it came, it raised great blisters and mortal sores. O how monstrous and horrible a thing it is, to hear the relation of the physician, who was appointed for the cure and government of the sick! This infirmity, says he, was so sharp and perverse, that no medicines could stay it; it killed and bore down all before it, insomuch that the only remedy, which the infected persons hoped for, was death, of which being certain, so soon as they found themselves ill, they began to make their winding-sheets; and there were ten thousand who wore them, whilst they yet lived; knowing certainly, that the remedy and end of their evil was to die; and in this manner stood, expecting the departure of the soul, and the fearful separation of the two so dear friends and companions: which he affirms to have seen in many persons; especially in one woman, who calling him at her window, to appoint something for her infirmity, he saw sewing her winding-sheet; and not long after, those who were appointed to inter the dead, entering the house, found her stretched out upon the floor, her winding-sheet not yet finished. To all this is human life subject. Let those, therefore, who are in health and gaiety, fear what may befall them.

SECTION III.

Notable Famines.

FAMINE is no less a misery of man's life than pestilence, which not only particular persons, but whole provinces, have often suffered. Such was that which afflicted the Romans, when Alaricus, that arch-enemy of mankind, after the destruction of all Italy, besieged Rome. The Romans came to that poverty, famine, and want of all things, that having nothing left of that which men commonly eat, they began to feed on horses, dogs, cats, rats, dormice, and other vermin, where they could lay hold on them; and when those failed, they ate one another. A horrible condition of human nature, that when God suffers us to fall into those straits, our necessity forces us to feed upon our

own kind! Nay, fathers spare not their sons, nor women those whom they have brought forth. The same happened in the siege of Jerusalem, as Eusebius recounts in his ecclesiastical history. At the siege of Numantia, when Scipio had cut off all provisions from entering the town, the inhabitants fell into that mortal and canine famine, that every day they sallied forth to catch Romans, as if they had hunted after wild beasts. Those whom they took, they fed upon their flesh, and drank their blood, as if they had drank fountain water, or fed upon kid. They pardoned none: but such as fell into their hands were cut in quarters, and sold by pieces publicly in the shambles; insomuch, that the flesh of a dead Roman was of greater value than the ransom of a live one. In the fourth book of Kings, there is mention made of a famine in Samaria, in the time of Elizeus the prophet, which much exceeds this. The want of food was so great, that the head of an ass was sold for eighty pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a small measure of pigeon's dung for five pieces. The most lamentable and inhuman was, that having spent all their provisions, women eat their own children; and one woman complained to the king of Israel, that her neighbor had broken an agreement made between them, which was, that they should first eat her child, and that done, the other's. "I (says she) have complied with my obligation, and we have already eaten mine, and now she has hid hers, and denies me my part." Which the king hearing, rent his garments, and was struck with unspeakable sorrow. Josephus (Joseph. l. 7. de bel. Jud. c. 2.), in the seventh book of the wars of the Jews, relates a story much like this, but executed with more fury, and after a more strange manner. There was, says he, in Jerusalem, when it was besieged, a lady, rich and noble, who had hid, in a house of the city, the most part of her wealth, and on the rest lived sparingly, and with great moderation. But she was not suffered to do so long; for the soldiers of the garrison discovering her stock, in a short time bereaved her both of what she had within doors, and without: and if she chanced at any time to be relieved by friends, or beg some little thing to assuage her hunger, they would take it from her, and tear the morsel out of her mouth. Seeing herself, therefore, destitute of all hope or counsel, and certain to die of hunger, and no possible remedy left for her necessities, she began to arm herself against the laws of nature, and beholding the infant which hung at her breast, she cried out in this manner: "O unhappy son of a more unhappy mother! how shall I now dispose of thee? where shall I preserve thee? Things are driven to that exigence, that though I save thy life from famine, thou art certain to be a slave to the Romans. Better it is, my son, that thou now sustain thy mother, who gave thee being, and strike a terror into those cursed sol-

diers, who have left me no other way of subsisting; better that thou become an argument of pity to future ages, and raise sorrow in hearts not yet born." At these words, she cut the throat of her tender infant, divided it in the middle, roasted one half, and eat it, and laid aside the rest for another meal. She had no sooner ended this lamentable tragedy, but the soldiers entered; who smelling the roasted flesh, began to threaten the woman with death, if she discovered not her store. But she, distracted with rage and horror of her act, and desiring nothing more than to accompany her dead infant, without fear or being abashed at all, replied in this manner: "Peace, friends; we will share like brothers:" and saying this, she fetched the half of the child, and placed it upon the table before them. At which hideous sight, the soldiers being amazed and confounded, conceived so greater horror and compassion in their hearts, that they were not able to utter one word; but she, on the contrary, staring upon them with a wild countenance, full of fury and distraction, with a hoarse and broken voice, spoke in this manner: "Why, how now, masters, how comes this to pass? Is not this my son, the fruit of my own body? is not this my act? Why do you not then eat, since I have begun to you? Are you, perhaps, more nice than a woman? are you more scrupulous than the mother who bore it? For shame, fall to; it is I who have eaten of it first, and it is I will bear you company in eating of the rest." But they, not being able to behold so horrible a spectacle, fled out of doors, and left the miserable mother with that little which remained of her son, and all her wealth.

To these stories I shall add one more lamentable, in which will clearly appear to what calamity human life stands exposed. It is written by William Parrain, a man of great learning and diligence, in a treatise of things memorable in his time. He relates it thus: In the year 1528, men were grown so dissolute in their lives, and so given over to all sorts of wickedness, that notwithstanding those cruel and bloody wars, which then reigned in most parts of Europe, they humbled not themselves, nor became converted to their Lord God, but grew every day worse, and fell into that extremity of vice and mischief, that God being offended, let loose the sharp arrows of his wrath and vengeance against the realm of France, with such fury, that all men thought the final destruction of that kingdom was then come. The want of corn, wine, and other fruits of the earth, and the miseries and calamities of those times were such, as no records ever mention the like. For five continued years, beginning at the year 1528, the four seasons of the year never kept their due and natural course, but were in that confusion and disorder, that sometimes autumn came in spring, and spring in autumn; summer in winter, and winter in summer; only the unnatural summer seemed to overcome the rest of the

parts of the year, and the heat doubled his forces against his enemy the cold : insomuch that in December, January and February, when the cold ought to season and mellow the earth with frost and snow, the heat was so excessive, that the ground was parched and burned up ; which was a most prodigious thing to behold. In all those five years, there were no two days together of hard weather ; neither those so intense, as to glaze the waters with the least show of ice ; by which excessive heat were bred in the bowels of the earth, an infinite number of vermin, snails, grubs, worms, lizards, and other creatures, which eat up the young and tender corn in the herb, and much of it was devoured and consumed in the husk before it sprung up : which was the reason, that wheat, which uses to sprout up several stems from one grain, hardly put forth one or two, and those so abortive, weak and dry, that in reaping time they gathered not half so much as they sowed, and sometimes nothing at all. This famine lasted without ceasing or intermission five whole years ; a thing so lamentable, that it is impossible for them to imagine who have not seen it. The people were so oppressed and afflicted with this mortal hunger, and many other evils which accompanied it, that it was pitiful to behold. For many who were rented men, and reasonable well to pass, left their houses, and went from door to door like wanderers, begging an alms for God's sake. Every day the number of the poor increased in such a manner, as it was fearful to behold them going up and down in troops, impossible to remedy, and dangerous to suffer. For besides the fear and hazard of being robbed, to which necessity might enforce them, the air was filled with stench and corruption from their breaths and bodies. To assuage their hunger, they filled themselves with all sorts of herbs, good and bad, wholesome and poisonous ; they ransacked all gardens and orchards, not sparing so much as the roots and stalks of cabbages, and of them found not enough to satisfy their ravenous appetites ; and failing of pot-herbs in the gardens, they fell upon those which grew wild in the fields. Many of them boiled great caldrons full of mallows and thistles, mingling with them a little bran, if they could get it ; and with this stuffed themselves like swine. It was a wonderful thing to see their many exquisite inventions of making bread of seeds, of herbs, of roots, of fern, of acorns, of hay-seeds, forced and taught by hunger, the mistress of the slothful : verifying that, which is commonly said, want and necessity make men seek out remedies not thought on ; as it made those miserable people, seeing hogs feed upon the roots of fern, to try whether they could make bread of it ; robbing the food even from swine to sustain themselves ; which evidently demonstrates the wrath of God against the impurity and filthiness of our sins, since he permits men to fall into that necessity, as to feed and feast with those unclean creatures. From hence were engendered

many sorts of infirmities ; great companies of men, women, boys and girls, young and old, of all ages, went up and down the streets naked, pale, shivering with cold, some swollen with dropsies, others stretched upon the ground half dead, and ready to draw the last gasp, and of such the stables and dunghills were full ; others trembled as if they were infected with quicksilver, so as they appeared more like ghosts and phantoms than living men. But above all, the greatest pity was to behold thousands of women, feeble, pale and famishing, charged with an infinite number of their poor languishing infants, who, dried up with hunger, could not so much as weep, or demand succor from their sorrowful and afflicted mothers, who could only help them with their pitiful and compassionate looks, of which rivers of tears which ran from their eyes were a sufficient witness ; and this certainly was the most lamentable scene of this most miserable tragedy. The same William Parrain writes, that in Lonhans, a town of Burgundy, he beheld a woman, who, with all the diligence she could use, had gotten a little morsel of black bread, which when she was about to have eaten, her infant, to whom she gave suck, a boy of about a year old, who had never until then eaten a bit, snatched it out of her hand ; at which the sorrowful mother admiring, beheld with what greediness he devoured that little piece of dry bread, as savorily as if it had been a cake ; which when he had eaten, the mother picked up the crumbs that fell from his mouth, intending to eat them herself, but the infant fell into so great unquietness, and so violent a fit of crying, that she was forced to leave them ; and truly it seemed the child knew the scarcity of that kind of food, and was, therefore, unwilling of a companion. What heart so hard and inhuman, that would not burst at the sight of so rueful a spectacle ? The same author further writes, that in another village near this, two women not finding any thing wherewith to assuage their hunger, filled themselves with sea-onions, not knowing the property of that venomous herb, which in such a manner poisoned them, that the extremities of their hands and feet became green as the skin of a lizard, and a corrupt matter flowed from between their nails and flesh ; for which not receiving help so soon as was requisite, they both died. There was no creature which became not an executioner of the wrath of God. The poor laborers left their lands and inheritances, in hope to be relieved by the rich, who had long since heaped up great quantities of corn in their granaries ; from whom at first they bought bread at excessive rates ; afterwards money failing, they sold and pawned their lands and inheritances, for vile and low prices ; for that which was worth a hundred crowns, was sold for ten. Such was the abominable and greedy avarice of the usurers ; as if it were not enough for the poor to be scourged by the wrath of God, and to have the elements and creatures declared their enemies,

but men themselves must become their executioners, and persecute and afflict their own kind. The extortioners perceiving the desired occasion which the perverseness of the time offered them, lost it not, but had brokers and factors in the villages to buy the inheritances of the poor, at what price they pleased; which the afflicted willingly parted with, that they might have wherewith to eat; and together with it, sold their cattle and household stuff, and the very necessities of their persons; and would with all their hearts have pawned their bowels, to have had wherewith to feed them. Besides this, many of them saw not their wheat measured, and were forced to take it as the sellers pleased, who were no juster in their measure than in the price. There were some usurers, who bought a piece of land for less money than the notaries would take for drawing the writings. After all this, the poor peasants saw themselves, their wives and children cast out of their houses, and to die in hospitals. All those miseries, which fall not under imagination, are found in the life of man.

SECTION IV.

Evils of War.

GREATER than all these calamities is that of war, which, of the three scourges of God, wherewith he chastises kingdoms, is the most terrible, as well because it is commonly followed by the two others, as for that it brings along with it greater punishments, and, which is worse, greater sins, whereof plagues are free, in which all endeavor to be reconciled to God, and even those who are in health, dispose themselves for death. The pestilence is sent by God, who is all goodness and mercy, not passing through the hands of men, as wars do. Wherefore, David held it for a mercy, that his people suffered pestilence, and not war, because he judged it better to fall into the hands of God, than men. Famine also, although it brings with it some sins, yet lessens others; although it be accompanied with many thefts, yet it suits not so much with pride and vanity; neither does it permit so many sorts of vices as are occasioned by war. To represent the calamities of war, it shall be sufficient to instance in some of those, which have been inflicted upon Germany in our own times, in these late wars; a book whereof was set forth in another country; whose argument or title I repeat not, as it is known; but it could not give an account of all. I shall only pick out some few of them, setting apart those places which were dispeopled and burned, whereof there were two thousand towns only in the dukedom of Bavaria. The cruelties, which the conquering soldiers inflicted upon the poor people, only to discover where their wealth lay, are such as were never heard of. One of their torments was, to tie a piece

of cord about their foreheads, and with a stick so to straighten and screw their temples, that the blood would often burst forth, and sometimes the very eyes and brains would start from their broken skulls. Others they left upon the floors of their houses, or stretched out upon a table, bound hand and foot, and so exposed them to be eaten by hungry dogs and cats; and it often happened that the starved cats would tear their bellies and feed upon their entrails. Others they hung up by the hands, some distance from the ground, and kindled a fire under them. To others they chopped off their noses and ears with chisels, and wore them in their hat-bands, holding it for a great gallantry, and him for the bravest man, who was the most cruel beast. To others they poured water into their mouths by a funnel, until they had filled their bodies like a tun, and then sat or stamped upon their bellies, until they made the water gush out of their mouths and nostrils. Others they tied to a post, and flayed them alive, like St. Bartholomew. From some they plucked out pieces of flesh with pincers; others they quartered and tore in pieces alive. They forced divers women, and afterwards cut off their arms. Many were so barbarous as to eat children; and one was known to take a small infant, and holding it by one leg with his left hand, to tear it asunder with his right, and so to eat and suck the blood of it. The prisoners which they took, they bound not their hands, but made holes through their arms, and putting cords through them, dragged them after their horses. The bodies of men, after they had drawn out their entrails, served as mangers wherein to feed their horses. They robbed all, killed and burned men in their houses; and some grave magistrates, whose lives they spared, were made to serve and wait bare-headed at table upon the meanest soldiers. Many, that they might not see and suffer those miseries, poisoned themselves; and divers maids, flying from the soldiers' lust, cast themselves headlong into rivers, and were drowned. To these miseries of war were added pestilence and famine. Those who fled from the enemy, died of the plague or hunger in the open fields; and there was none to bury them, but dogs and ravenous birds which eat them. Neither had those who died in houses a more honorable sepulchre, but were likewise devoured by rats and vermin, who were grown so bold, as sometimes, if they were but one or two in a house, to eat them whilst they lived, their weakness being such, that they were not able to defend themselves. But the men in many places were revenged of this affront, and eat the rats, for which there were public shambles, where they were sold at high prices. Those cities were esteemed happy, that had such dainties to sell; in other places nothing was to be had, but what every one provided by his own diligence. They often quarrelled about a rat, and cut one another in pieces in the dispute; and happy was he, that got a quarter of such loathsome

vermin. Horse-flesh was a great dainty, and they esteemed themselves very fortunate, who knew where to light on a dead horse. Certain women found a dead wolf, all putrefied and full of worms, and fed upon it as savorily as if it had been a kid. The bodies of malefactors, which hung upon gibbets, were not secure; nor did the dead escape, that were buried in their graves; both were stolen in the night to sustain the living. Neither were they free from this danger who were alive; for two women were known to kill a third, and eat her. After such fresh examples, it will not be needful to call to memory the calamities of former wars. What is said, is sufficient to express the miseries which are incident to human life.

SECTION V.

Miseries occasioned by human Passions.

ABOVE all, the greatest calamities of man's life are not pestilence, famine, or war, but human passions, not subordinate to reason. Wherefore St. John Chrysostom (Chrys. in Mat.) says, "Amongst all evils, man is the most evil. Every beast has an evil, that is proper and peculiar to it; but man is all evils. The devil dares not approach a just man; but man dares despise him." And in another place, to the same purpose (Hom. in Ascen.): "Man is compared to the beasts of the field. It is worse to be compared to a beast, than to be one; for it is no fault to be born an unreasonable creature; but to be endued with reason, and to be compared to a beast, is a fault of the will; so that our untamed passions make us worse than beasts." It is not credible what one man suffers from the passions of another. What did David suffer from the envy of Saul? Exile, hunger, dangers and war. Naboth sooner lost his life by the covetousness of Achab, than he could have done by a plague. Elias was more afflicted with the desire of revenge of Jezabel, than if he had had the pestilence; for that made him weary of his life, and this would but have made him weary of his disease. What plagues, or wars, or tortures were like the ambition of Herod, which destroyed so many thousand children? What contagion was more mortal than the cruelty of Nero, and other tyrants, who took away the lives of so many innocent people, to satisfy their fears or fancies? Wherefore, Tully says (Cicero de Finibus), "Our desires are insatiable, and not only destroy particular persons, but entire families, and ruin the whole commonwealth. From desires spring hatred, dissensions, discords, seditions and wars." What sorts of death and torments have not hatred and human cruelty found out? What sorts of poison have not the passions of man invented? Orpheus, Orus, Medesius, Heliodorus, and other authors, have found five hundred several ways of giving poison hiddenly; which

have since been increased by others ; but in respect of what is this day known and practised, they were ignorant. Nothing is now secure, since poison has been given even in the shaking of hands, when we were to be reconciled, and made friends. Only in the sense of hearing it has not yet found a door to enter ; all the rest of the senses it has mastered : with the smell of a rose, with the sight of a letter, with the touch of a thread, with the taste of a grape, death has found an entrance.

There is nothing brings more misery upon a man than his passions, with which he pardons not himself. The proud man grieves and consumes for the felicity of another ; the envious dies to see a happy man live ; the covetous man loses his sleep, for what he has no need of ; the impatient man tears his bowels, for that which imports not ; and the choleric man ruins himself, for what no way concerns him. How many, for not conquering one passion, have lost their fortunes, their quiet, and their lives, both temporal and eternal ! Witness Aman, who desiring more reverence than was due to him, lost his honor, wealth and life, and ended on a gibbet. The ambition of Absalom rested not until it left him hanged on a tree, by the hair of his head. In the same manner, the disordinate love of Amnon, which made him first sick and pale, and distempered him more than a burning fever, at last cost him his life. To many, their unmortified passions have been like cruel hangmen, which have suddenly bereaved them of their lives. Dobravius (Dubravius, l. 2. Hist. Bohem. an. 1418.) writes, that Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, entered into so great fury against a courtier of his, for not giving him timely notice of an uproar, raised by Lisca in Prague, that he was like to have killed him with his own hands ; but being withheld from defiling his royal majesty with the blood of his vassal, he fell into an apoplexy, and died immediately. The death of Nerva (Aurel. Vict. in Epitome vitæ Nervæ) was likewise upon sudden anger. And Pliny writes of Diodorus Cymus, that he suddenly died of shame, because he was not able to answer a question proposed by Estibon. Through fear, grief, joy, and love many have died. I will only relate here a lamentable story written by Paulus Jovius. (Jovius, l. 39. Hist. sui temporis.) A certain married man had lived long in adultery with so great scandal, that the bishop of the city excommunicated both him and his paramour, if they accompanied any more together. The man was so besotted with his passion, that contemning the command of the bishop, he went secretly one day to see his mistress, who having repented of what was past, entertained him with harsh language, reprehended his imprudence, and commanded him to depart her presence, and never more to see her. But he still continued in his madness, began to call her ungrateful and unworthy, and in a rage clasping his hands together, and

lifting up his eyes towards heaven, as if it were to complain of her unkindness, fell down dead, and in a moment lost both his life temporal and eternal; and his body was not suffered to be interred in hallowed earth. If, then, our disordered passions be so hurtful to our own lives, how dangerous and prejudicial are they to the lives of others! Certainly, if all other misfortunes were wanting, those were sufficient, which are caused by human passions. There is much to be suffered from the conditions of men; ill language, displeasing correspondences, wilful injuries, and perverse dispositions. All man is misery, and cause of miseries. Who is so happy to content all, and be envied by none? who is so general a well-doer, that nobody complains of him? who so liberal, that he finds not some ungrateful? who so esteemed, that some murmurers do not despise him? The Athenians found fault with their Simonides, because he talked too loud: the Thebans accused Panniculus, that he spit too much: the Lacedæmonians noted in Lycurgus, that he went hanging down his head: the Romans thought Scipio slept too much, and that he snorted too loud: the Uticans were scandalized at Cato's eating too fast on both sides at once: they held Pompey for rude and ill-bred, because he scratched his head with one finger: the Carthaginians spoke ill of Hannibal, because he went open-breasted, with his stomach bare: others laughed at Julius Cæsar, because he was ill girt. There is none so upright, in whom envy or extravagant tempers will not find something to reprehend.

The greatest miseries are those which men by their unbridled affections bring upon themselves. Whence proceeded that notable saying of Ecclesiastes, which far exceeds all that has been spoken by philosophers concerning human misery: "I praised (says he) the dead before the living; I judged him more happy than either who was not born, nor had seen the evils which are done under the sun." For there is nothing which offends human nature more than the follies and impertinences of men, and the hatreds, injustices, violences and inhumanities caused by their irregular passions. Whereupon some philosophers, seeing human nature governed by passion, and not by reason, wholly abhorred it. Amongst whom, Timon, of Athens, was the principal beginner and most earnest professor of that sect; for he did not only call himself the capital enemy of mankind, but confirmed his words by his actions; for he neither conversed nor dwelt with men, but lived in the desert amongst wild beasts, remote from neighborhood or towns; neither would he be visited by any, nor discourse with any, but an Athenian captain, called Alcibiades; and that not for friendship or affection, but because he hoped and foresaw (as indeed it happened afterwards) that he would one day be the ruin of his country, and the destruction of a multitude of men. Neither was he content only with this aversion for

men, but studied and invented all means possible to destroy them. He caused gallows to be made in his gardens, whereon such as were desperate and weary of life might conveniently hang themselves: and having occasion, some years after, to make use of his gardens for the enlarging of his house, he would not pull down his gallows till he had called the people together to hear his oration, assuring them that he had something new and of importance to speak to them. The people, having been long acquainted with his humor, expecting something that was extraordinary, willingly assembled to hear him; to whom he spoke in this manner:—"O Athenians! you are not ignorant that many have made away with themselves in my gardens; I have now occasion to dispose of them otherwise, and therefore thought good to tell you, that if any of you have a mind to hang yourselves, that you do it quickly:" and so, without more words, with this loving offer concluded his speech, and returned to his own house, where he ended his life in the same opinion, ever philosophising on the misery of man. And when the pangs of death came upon him, abhorring mankind even to the last gasp, he commanded that his body should not be interred in the earth, as in the common element, wherein usually were buried the bodies of others, afraid lest his bones should lie near or be touched by men, though dead, but that they should make his sepulchre on the brink of the sea, that the fury of the waves might hinder the approach of all others; and that they should engrave upon it this epitaph, which is related by Plutarch:—"After my miserable life, they buried me in this deep water. Reader, desire not to know my name. The gods confound thee." This philosopher wanted faith and charity, not distinguishing between the malice of man and his nature; having reason to abhor that, and to love this. Yet, by these extravagant demonstrations, he gave us to understand how monstrous are our passions, and how worthy of hate, when they are not ordered and governed by reason. And, certainly, all Christians ought to desire the destruction of the pomp and pride of men, as Timon did of their persons; their superfluous gallantry, their unlawful pleasures, their ostentation of riches, their vain titles of honor, their raging envy, their disordered choler, their unjust revenges, their unbridled passions. These ought to die and be destroyed, that the men may live.

SECTION VI.

So many are the miseries of life, that they cannot all be numbered. Death, which is called by Aristotle the greatest of evils, is by many esteemed a less evil than life; the many evils in this surpassing the greatness of the evil in that; and, therefore, many have thought it better to suffer the greatest, which is death, than to suffer so many, though less, which are in life. For this reason, one

calls death the last and greatest physician, because, though in itself it is the greatest evil, it cures all others; and therefore prescribes the hope of it as an efficacious remedy and comfort in the afflictions of life. But because this comfort is not relished by all, the fear of death being so natural, and the dangers and many ways to it, accounted amongst the many miseries of life, therefore some prime philosophers could find out no other remedy for evils, than to despair of their remedy. Wherefore Seneca, when a great earthquake happened in his time in Campania, wherein Pompeii, a famous city, and divers other towns, were sunk, and many people lost, and the rest of the inhabitants, distracted with fear and grief, fled from their country, as if they had been banished, he advised them to return home, and assured them, that there was no remedy for the evils of this life, and that the dangers of death were unavoidable. And truly, if well considered, what security can there be in life, when, the earth, which is the mother of the living, is unfaithful to them, and sprouts up miseries and deaths, even of whole cities? What can be secure in the world, if the world itself be not; and the most solid parts of it shake? If that, which is only immovable and fixed for to sustain the living, tremble with earthquakes, if what is proper to the earth, which is to be firm, be unstable and betray us, where shall our fears find a refuge? When the roof of the house shakes, we may fly into the fields; but when the world shakes, whither shall we go? What comfort can we have, when fear cannot find a gate to fly out at? Cities resist enemies with their walls: tempests find a shelter in the heavens; the covering of houses defends us from rains and snows; in the time of plague we may change places: but from the whole earth who can fly, and therefore from dangers? For this reason Seneca said, Not to have a remedy, may serve us as a comfort in our evils; for fear is foolish without hope. Reason banishes fear in those who are wise; and in those who are not, despair of remedy gives a kind of security, at least takes away fear. He that will fear nothing, let him think that all things are to be feared. See what slight things endanger us; even those which sustain life lay ambushes for us. Meat and drink, without which we cannot live, take away our lives. It is not wisdom, therefore, to fear being swallowed by an earthquake, and not to fear the falling of a tile. In death, all sorts of dying are equal. What imports it, whether one single stone kill thee, or a whole mountain oppress thee? Death consists in the souls leaving the bodies, which often happens by slight accidents.

But Christians, in all the dangers and the miseries of human life, have other comforts to lay hold on, which are a good conscience, hope of glory, conformity to the divine will, and the imitation and example of Jesus Christ. From these four he shall in life have merit, in death security, in both comfort, and in eter-

nity a reward. Justus Lipsius being much oppressed with his last infirmity, whereof he died, some who were present endeavored to comfort him with some philosophical reasons and sentences of the Stoics, wherein that most learned man was much studied, as appears in his book of the introduction to stoical philosophy; to whom he answered in this most Christian manner: "Vain are all those consolations;" and pointing to an image of Christ crucified, said, "This is the true comfort and true patience." And presently, with a sigh that rose from the bottom of his heart, he said, "My Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, give me Christian patience." This comfort we ought to have, who were redeemed by so loving a Lord, that, considering our sins are greater than the pains of this life, and that the Son of God has suffered far greater, who was free from all sin, he has deserved to convert the miseries of this life, which are occasioned by sin, into instruments of satisfaction for our sins; drawing health out of infirmity, and an antidote out of poison.

We may also draw from what is said, how unjust was the complaint of Theophrastus, that nature had given a longer life to many birds and beasts, than to man. If our life were less troublesome, he had some reason; but it being so fraught with miseries, he might rather think that life the happiest, which was shortest. Wherefore St. Jerome said to Heliodorus, It is better to die young and die well, than to die old and die ill. This voyage being of necessity, the felicity of it consists not in being long, but in being prosperous, and that we at last arrive in the desired port. St. Austin says (August. in Johan.), that to die, is to be eased of those heavy burdens which we bear in this life; and that the happiness is not to leave it late in the evening of our age, but that when we die, they charge us not with a greater load. Let a man live ten years, or let him live a thousand, death (as St. Jerome says) gives him the title of happy or unfortunate. If he lives a thousand years in sorrow, it is a great unhappiness; but greater, if he lives them ill, though with content; and therefore, supposing so many miseries, we cannot complain of God for having given us a short life, but of ourselves for having made it a bad life. Finally, as St. Ambrose says, (Ambr. Ser. Quadrages.) our life being compassed with so many miseries, as that death seems rather a shelter for evils than a punishment, God was pleased that it should be short, that the vexations and misfortunes of it, which cannot be counterpoised with any joys of the earth, might be more supportable. At least if this life, with so many miseries, do not displease us, yet let the eternal, with all her felicities, content us better: and let us not endeavor less for the immortal life of heaven, than we do for this mortal one of earth. And therefore, as St. Austin says (August. tract. 5. in Johan. hom. 57.), "If thou run a hundred miles for this life, how many

oughtest thou to run for the eternal; and if thou makest such speed to obtain a few days and uncertain, how oughtest thou to run for life eternal!"

CHAPTER VIII.

How little is Man whilst he is Temporal.

IF we consider the greatest thing in nature, which is man, we shall see how little he is, whilst he is temporal. "What is man?" (says Seneca). "A frail vessel, broken with the least motion; a most weak body, naked by nature, and unarmed, necessitous of a mother's help, subject to the injuries of fortune, impatient of cold and labor, composed of things infirm and fluid; and those very things, without which we cannot live, as smell, taste, watching, meat and drink, are mortal to us." The wise Solon (Anton. in Mel. Stob. Ser. 96) did not answer more favorably, when they demanded of him, what was man. "He is (said he) a corruption in his birth, a beast in his life, and food for worms when he is dead." Aristotle being asked the same question (Dionys. Rikel. de noviss. art. 15.), answered, "That man was an idea of weakness, a spoil of time, a game of fortune, an image of inconstancy, a balance of envy and calamity; and the rest is phlegm and choler." Secundus, the philosopher, being also demanded the same by Adrian the emperor, answered, "That man was an incorporeal understanding, a phantasm of time, a looker upon life, a slave of death, a travelling passenger, a gust of place, a toiling soul, a habitation for a short time." And St. Bernard says, "That man, in this time of mortality, is but a beast of carriage." And the same saint in another place says, "What is man but a vessel of dung?" and in his meditations he adds: "If thou markest what he voids at his mouth and nose, and at the other sinks of his body, thou hast not in all thy life beheld a more noisome dunghill." In the same part he says, "Man is no other thing but unclean seed, a sack of dung, a food for worms." More full, Innocent (Innocen. de Contempla. Mundi lib. 1. c. 1.) the pope: "I have considered (says he) with tears, what man was made of, what he is, and what he shall be. He was made of earth, and conceived in sin, and born for punishment. He does things evil, which are not lawful, things filthy, which are not decent, and things vain, which are not expedient. He shall be the food of fire, meat for worms, and a mass of corruption. O vile indignity of human condition! O unworthy condition of human baseness! Behold the plants and trees. They produce flowers, and leaves, and fruit, and thou nothing but nits and

worms. They furnish us with oil, wine and balsam; thou affordest nothing but phlegm and dung. Those send forth a fragrant color, and thou abominable stench. Such as is the tree, such is the fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit; and what is man, but a tree reversed?" This is the saying of this holy pope; and such is man, even in his youth and best time. But if he reach old age, which is esteemed as a felicity, the same Innocent adds: "His heart is afflicted, his head shakes, his spirits languish, his breath smells, his face wrinkles, his stature bends, his eyes wax dim, his joints quake, his nose runs, his hands tremble, his hair falls, his teeth rot, his ears grow deaf. Neither is he more changed in body than in mind. An old man is easily displeased, hardly pacified, believes quickly, long before disabused, is greedy, covetous, peevish, froward, still complaining, quick in talking, slow in hearing, admires what is past, contemns what is present, sighs, grieves, languishes, and is always infirm."

It may also appear what man is by the 'stuff' whereof he is made. The first God made of clay, mixing together the vilest and grossest elements. The rest of men who have succeeded, have been made of a matter more loathsome and unclean; and worse is that wherewith they are nourished in their mothers' wombs; and their birth is accompanied with shame, grief and pollution; which Pliny considering, speaks in this manner: "It is a compassion, nay a shame, to think of the origin of the proudest of living creatures, which is man; who often is abortive by the smell of a newly-extinguished candle. From such beginnings sprung our tyrants; from hence the butcherly mind of those cruel hangmen. Thou who gloriest in the strength of body, thou who embracest the gifts of fortune, and thinkest not thyself her servant, but her son and darling, thou who settest thy mind wholly upon victories, thou, who puffed up with success, holdest thyself a god, see how thou mightst have perished even before thou wert, with so little a thing as a snuff of a candle, and mayst yet with a smaller matter, pricked with the little tooth of an adder, or, like Anacreon the poet, choked with the stone of a grape; or, like Fabius the Roman senator, suffocated with a hair in a draught of milk." Thus far Pliny, who not only admired the baseness of the nature of man, but the easiness of his end.

Consider also wherein man ends. "Man whilst he lives," says pope Innocent (Lib. 3. c. 1.), "engenders nits and vermin; when he is dead, grubs and worms; whilst he lives, affords us nothing but dung and filth; when he is dead, stink and rottenness; alive, he feeds but one man, but dead, a multitude of worms. What thing more noisome than a human carcass? What more horrible than a dead man? He whose embraces were most acceptable, when he was alive, even his sight is troublesome when he is dead. What do riches, banquets or delights profit us? They shall not

free us from death ; they shall not defend us from the worms ; they shall not take away our stench and ill-favor. He who even now was seated on a glorious throne, is now flung into an obscure tomb ; he who lately feasted in a sumptuous chamber, is now feasted upon by worms in a dark sepulchre." All this is from this contemplative pope. St. Bernard (Bernard. c. 3. Meditat.) also, considering this miserable end of man, says, "Man is converted into no man ; why, therefore, art thou proud ? Know that thou wert before thy birth unclean and curdled blood, exposed afterwards to sin, and the many miseries of this life, and after death shalt be the food of worms. Wherefore dost thou wax proud, dust and ashes, whose conception was in sin, whose birth in misery, whose life in pain, and whose death necessity ? Wherefore dost thou swell and adorn thyself with precious things, which in few days is to be devoured by worms ; and dost not rather adorn thy soul with good works, which is to be presented in heaven, before God and his angels ?" All this is spoken to himself.

SECTION II.

Besides that man is a thing so poor and little, and composed of so base and vile materials, this littleness, this vileness has no firmness nor consistence, but is a river of changes, a perpetual corruption, and, as *Secundus*, the philosopher, says, a phantasm of time ; whose instability is thus declared by *Eusebius of Cæsarea* (Lib. 11. *Præp. Evan.* c. 7.) : "Our nature, from our birth until our death, is unstable, and, as it were, fantastical, which if you strive to comprehend, is like water gathered in the palm of the hand ; the more you grasp it, the more you spill it. In the same manner, those mutable and transitory things, the more you consider them with reason, the more they fly from you. Things sensible being in a perpetual flux, are still doing and undoing ; still generating and corrupting, and never remain the same. For, as *Heraclitus* says, as it is impossible to enter twice into the same river, because the same water remains not, but new succeeds still, as the first passes ; so, if you consider twice this mortal substance, you shall not both times find it the same, but with an admirable swiftness of change it is now extended, now contracted ; but it is not well to say, Now and now ; for in the same time it loses in one part, and gains in another, and is another thing than what it is, insomuch as it never rests. The embryo quickly becomes an infant, from thence a boy, from thence a young man, from thence an old, and then decrepit ; and so the first ages being past, and corrupted by new ones, which succeed, it comes at last to die. How ridiculous then are men to fear one death, who have already died so many, and are yet to

die more ! Not only, as Heraclitus said, the corruption of fire is the generation of air, but this appears more plainly in ourselves ; for, from youth corrupted, is engendered man, and from him the old man ; from the boy corrupted, is engendered the youth, and from the infant the boy, and from him who was not yesterday, he who is to-day ; and from him who is to-day, he who shall be to-morrow ; so as he never remains the same ; but in every moment we change, as it were, with various phantasms, in one common matter. For, if we be still the same, how come we to delight in things we did not before ? We now love and abhor after another manner than formerly ; we now praise and dispraise other things than we did before ; we use other words, and are moved with other affections ; we do not hold the same form, nor pass the same judgment we did ; and how is it possible, that without change in ourselves, we should thus change in our motions and affections ? Certainly, he who still changes is not the same ; and he who is not the same, cannot be said to be, but in a continual mutation slides away like water. The sense is deceived with the ignorance of what is, and thinks that to be which is not. Where shall we then find true being, but in that only which is eternal, and knows no beginning, which is incorruptible, which is not changed with time ? Time is movable, and joined with movable matter ; glides away like a current, and like a vessel of generation and corruption retains nothing : insomuch, that the first and the last, that which was, and that which shall be, are nothing, and that which seems present, passes like lightning. Wherefore, as time is defined to be the measure of the motion of things sensible, and as time never is, nor can be ; so we may with the like reason say, that things sensible do not remain, nor are, nor have any being." All this is from Eusebius ; which David declared more briefly and significantly, when he said, that man, whilst he lived in this life, was a universal vanity. Wherefore St. Gregory Nazianzen (In laud. Cæs.), said, that we are a dream, unstable, like a spectre or apparition, which could not be laid hold on.

Let man therefore reflect upon all that has been said ; let him behold himself in this glass ; let him see wherefore he presumes, wherefore he afflicts himself for things of the earth, which are so small in themselves, and so prejudicial to him. With reason did the prophet say, "In vain doth man trouble himself." Upon which St. Chrysostom (Chrysost. in Ps. xxxvi.), with great admiration, speaks in this manner : "Man troubles himself, and loses his end ; he troubles himself, consumes and melts to nothing, as if he had never been born ; he troubles himself, and before he attains rest, is overwhelmed ; he is inflamed like fire, and is reduced to ashes like flax ; he mounts on high like a tempest, and like dust is scattered and disappears ; he is kindled like

a flame, and vanishes like smoke ; he glories in his beauty like a flower, and withers like hay ; he spreads himself as a cloud, and is contracted as a drop ; he swells like a bubble of water, and goes out like a sparkle ; he is troubled, and carries nothing about him, but the filth of riches ; he is troubled only to gain dirt ; he is troubled, and dies without fruit of his vexations. His are the troubles, others' the joys ; his are the cares, others' the contents ; his are the afflictions, others' the fruit : his are the heart-burstings, others' the delights ; his are the curses, others have the respect and reverence ; against him the sighs and exclamations of the persecuted are sent up to heaven, and against him the tears of the poor are poured out, and the riches and abundance remain with others ; he shall howl and be tormented in hell, whilst others sing, triumph, and vainly consume his estate. In vain do living men trouble themselves. Man is he who enjoys a life but lent him, and that but for a short time ; man is but a debt of death, which is to be paid without delay ; a living creature, who is in his will and appetite untamed, a mischief taught without a master, a voluntary ambush, subtle in wickedness, witty in iniquity, prone to covetousness, insatiable in the desire of what is another's, of a boasting spirit, and full of insolent temerity ; bold in his words, but quickly quelled ; an arrogant clay, an insolent dust, and a sparkle, which in a moment is extinguished ; a flame which quickly dies, a light, which vanishes into air, a dead leaf, withered hay, faded grass, a nature which consumes itself ; to-day abounds in wealth, and is to-morrow in his grave ; to-day, hath his brows circled with a diadem, and to-morrow is with worms ; he is to-day, and to-morrow ceases to be ; triumphs and rejoices to-day, and to-morrow is lamented ; immeasurably insolent in prosperity, and in adversity admits no comfort ; who knows not himself, yet is curious in searching what is above him ; is ignorant of what is present, and scoffs at what is to come ; he who is mortal by nature, and out of pride, thinks himself eternal ; he who is an open house of perturbations, a game of divers infirmities, a concourse of daily calamities, and a receptacle of all sorrow. O how great is the tragedy of our baseness ! and how many things have I said ! But it cannot better be declared, than by the voice of the prophet : ' In vain doth man who lives trouble himself.' For truly the things of this life, which shine and glitter most, are of less profit than a putrefied carcass." This is from St. John Chrysostom, in which he clearly sets forth the misery of man, the shortness of his life and the vanity of things temporal.

SECTION III.

And that the perfect knowledge of ourselves may not be wanting to us, man is not only thus vile and base whilst he lives, and much more being dead, but even his soul, whilst it remains in his body, is not of much greater esteem. For although the soul be of itself a most noble substance, yet our vices do so much vilify it, that they make it more abominable than the body. And without doubt, the soul, when it is dead in mortal sin, is more corrupt and stinking in the sight of the angels, than a body dead eight days ago; for if that body be full of worms, this is full of devils and vices. And even whilst the soul lives, and is free from any mortal sin, yet, by committing those, which are but venial, it becomes full of imperfections; and, although it be not dead, yet it is more weak, feeble and languishing than a sick body; and if a man knew himself well, he would be more affrighted at the misery of his soul, than at that of his flesh. The devout father, Alfonso Roderiguez, a most excellent master in spiritual matters, writes of a holy woman, who desired light from God, to know in what condition she was; and saw in herself such ugliness and deformity, that she was not able to suffer it, and therefore besought God again, saying, "Not so much, O Lord, for I shall faint and be dismayed." Father John d'Avila says, that he knew a person, who had often importuned God to discover to him what he was. It pleased God to open his eyes but a very little, and yet that little had like to have cost him dear; for he beheld himself so ugly and abominable, that he cried out aloud, "Lord! of thy mercy, take from before mine eyes this mirror; I desire not any more to behold my figure." Donna Sancha Corillo, that most fervent servant of Christ, after she had led a most perfect and admirable life, besought our Lord to give her a sight of her soul, that seeing the filthiness of her sins, she might be further moved to abhor them. Our Lord was pleased to grant her request, and showed it her in this form. One night as she sat alone in her chamber, the door open, there passed before her an ancient hermit, his hair all gray, and in his hand a staff to support him. She, amazed at the sight of such a man, in such a habit, at so unseasonable an hour, was a little surprised with fear; yet recollecting herself, said to him, "Father, what seek ye for here?" to whom he answered, "Lift up my cloak, and you shall see." She did so, and beheld a little girl, sickly, pale and weak, with her face all covered over with flies. She took it in her arms, and demanded of him, "Father, what is this?"—"Dost thou not remember (replied the hermit) when thou earnestly desiredst of our Lord, that he would give thee a view of thy soul? Behold the figure of it! after this manner it is." This said, the apparition vanished, and she remained so confused and

affrighted, that it seemed to her (as she afterwards confessed), that all her bones were displaced with such grief and pain, as, had it not been for the great favor and mercy of God, it had been impossible for her to endure it. She passed that night almost overwhelmed with the waves of her sad and troubled thoughts. The appearance of that girl, so feeble and discolored, afflicted her extremely, contemplating it as the image of her soul; especially when she reflected on the face, covered with those impertinent and troublesome little creatures, her grief was doubled; and it seemed to her, as if it had smelt like something that was dead, or some old sore; which made her send up a thousand sighs to heaven, and to desire a remedy and mercy from our Lord. No sooner did the day, so much desired by her, appear, but she repaired instantly to her confessor, a person of great virtue and learning, and desired him with many tears, to explain to her the meaning of that vision, and to tell her, whether those little creatures did signify any grievous and hidden sins, which her soul knew nothing of. The confessor took some short time to recommend his answer to our Saviour; which done, he returned, and said to her, "Madam, trouble not yourself, but render hearty thanks to God for the favor he has done you; and know, that the feebleness, which appeared in the image of your soul, was an effect of venial sins, which weaken, but kill not; cool, but extinguish not, the charity of our souls; for if they had been mortal sins, the girl would have been dead; for those deprive the soul wholly of life; those which are venial, only take away our fervor and promptness in the service of God, and the perfect accomplishing of his holy law. If, then, the souls of so great servants of God are so full of miseries, wherein can miserable man boast, since he is so both in soul and body?"

CHAPTER IX.

How deceitful are all Things Temporal.

FROM what has hitherto been said, may be collected, how great a lie and cozenage is all that which passes in time, and that the things of the earth, besides that they are base, inconstant and transitory, are also deceitful and full of danger. This is signified to us in the Apocalypse by the harlot, by which was denoted human prosperity, who sat upon that monstrous beast, which is the world. And amongst other ornaments, as the Scripture says, she was adorned with gilded gold; which gives us to understand her falsehood: since it was not true and fine gold which she wore,

but false and counterfeited ; for although it seemed gold, it was but alchemy ; and yet being gilt, she sold it for true gold. So the prosperity of the world comes decked with the goods of the earth, which she sells for true goods, setting them forth as great, secure and lasting, when they are nothing less. All is but deceit and cozenage ; which is well expressed by Seneca, when he says, "That is only good which is honest ; other goods are false and adulterate." What greater falsehood and deceit, than to make those things which are most vile and base, to appear so precious, and of such esteem, that men pretend nothing greater, and being more changeable than the moon, to appear constant and secure, insomuch, that we remain so satisfied with them, as if they were never to change ; and being fading and corruptible, we seek after them as if they were eternal and immortal, remembering nothing less than their end, and ours, forgetting wholly that they are to perish, and we to die ? It is evident they are false, since they promise of themselves, what they neither have nor are. Those who work in perspective will so paint a room, that the light entering only through some little hole, you shall perceive beautiful and perfect figures and shapes ; but if you open the windows and let in a full light, at most you shall see but imperfect lines and shadows. So the things of this world seem great and beautiful to those who are in darkness, and have but little light of heaven ; but those who enjoy the perfect light of truth and faith, find nothing in them of substance. The felicity of this life is but a fiction, and a shadow of true happiness, and by that name is often designated in holy Scripture, which excellently expresses the nature of it. For the shadow is not a body, but a resemblance of a body, and seeming to be something, is nothing. The inconstancy, also, and speedy change of human things deserves this name ; because the shadow is always altering, and ends on a sudden. And as the shadow, when it is at length, and can increase no further, is nearest the end ; so temporal goods and human fortunes, when they are mounted up high as the stars, are then nearest to vanish, and disappear suddenly. And therefore, one of the friends of Job said, I saw the fool, that he had taken deep rooting, and instantly I cursed his beauty ; for the more firm he appeared to stand, the more near he was to his fall. And David said he saw the sinner exalted as a cedar, but he endured no longer than he turned his eyes.

What is to deceive, but to publish that for truth which is not, and to promise that which shall never be accomplished ? I leave to the witness of every one, how often the issue of their hopes have proved vain, not finding in what they desired that content which they expected. In riches they hope for peace and repose, but meet with nothing but inquietness and cares, and many times with dangers and losses. For this, Christ, our Redeemer, called

riches deceits, saying, that the divine word was choked with the falsehood and deceit of riches. He is not content with calling them false and deceitful, but calls them falsehoods and deceits: for what can be more false and perfidious than, promising one thing, to perform just the contrary? The prosperity of this world promises us goods, and gives us evils; promises us ease, and gives us cares; promises security, and gives us danger; promises us great contents, and gives us great vexations; promises us a sweet life, and gives us a bitter. With reason it is said in the book of Job, that the bread which the worldly man eats, shall be converted into the gall of asps; because that in those things which seem necessary for his life, as the bread of his mouth, he shall meet his death, and when he hopes for pleasure, he shall find gall, and no morsel which shall not leave some bitterness behind it. There is no felicity upon earth, which carries not its counterpoise of misfortunes; no happiness, which mounts so high, which is not depressed by some calamity. For, as they anciently painted human fancy in the form of a young man, with one arm lifted up with wings, as if it meant to fly towards heaven, and the other weighed down by some great weight, which hindered it from rising; so human felicity, how high soever it soars, has still something to depress it.

SECTION II.

If we will evidently see how deceitful are the things of this world, this is a convincing argument, that no man, after he has enjoyed what he most desires, is content with his condition, which apparently shows their deceit; neither does any man cease to desire more, though he possesses the greatest and most ample fortune in the world; which also argues their falsehood, since they satisfy not those who possess them. No man but envies the life of some other, and grieves and complains of his own, though far more happy: Constantine the Great (Euseb. in Orat. de laudibus Constant.), who was arrived at the height of human felicity, said his life was something more honorable than that of goatherds and shepherds, but much more painful and troublesome. Alfonsus, king of Naples, said, the life of kings was the life of asses, for the great burdens which they bear. So as in the book of Job it is said: "The giants groan under the waters." In which place (as Albertus Magnus explains it), by the giants are understood the mighty ones of the earth, upon whom it sends troubles and vexations, (for so the name of waters signifies in that place of holy Scripture,) which make them groan under the intolerable weight of them. They are like the giants, which in great cities are shown at their solemn feasts; that which appears, is some great and stately bulk covered with gold and silks; but that

which appears not, is the little poor man, who carries it upon his shoulders, sweating, groaning, tired and half dead with the weight. The sumpter mules of the grandees of Spain, at their first coming to court, are laden with great wealth of silver vessels, tissue beds, and rich hangings, their sumpter-cloths embroidered, their winding-staves of silver, their cords of silk, with their great plumes, their bells, bosses and other furniture. But although their load be rich and sumptuous, yet, in fine, it is a load and oppresses them, and they are ready to faint and sink under it. So is honor, empire and command. Even king David confessed as much, and says, that his loins were, as it were, disjointed, and he was bruised and wearied with the burden. Some kings have said that which is particularly related by Stobæus of Antigonus (Stob. Ser. 3.), who, when he was crowned king of Macedonia, said, "O crown, more noble than happy! if men knew how full thou art of cares and dangers, no man would take thee up, though he should find thee in the streets." And Dionysius, to express the anxieties of the life of kings, said it was like that of condemned persons, who every hour expect death. This is signified by the cup of gold, which the woman (that is, prosperity), who sat upon the monster with seven heads (that is, the world), held in her hand; which, although it made a fair show, yet was full of abomination: because there is none who speaks not ill of his own condition, and many, who seem most fortunate, abhor their own lot, although it appear glorious to others. Solomon was the king who most enjoyed the goods of this life; for he resolved to satiate himself with delights, even until he surfeited. He had a thousand wives, whereof seven hundred were queens, and three hundred were concubines; he had sumptuous buildings and palaces, gardens, orchards, houses of pleasure, woods, groves, fish-ponds, excellent music, men and women singers, the greatest and best ordered court in the world; his service and vessels of gold and silver so sumptuous as it caused admiration in the queen of Saba: his cavalry consisted of forty thousand horse, with furniture suitable, in perpetual pay. The treasure which his father David left him was, according to Budæus, ten times greater than that of Darius, king of Persia. Finally, he arrived to that point of happiness and felicity in all kinds, that he himself admired it, and acknowledged himself for the most fortunate prince in the world, and said, "Who shall feed like me? and who shall abound in all delights and pleasures as I do?" Yet in all this prosperity, than which greater cannot be imagined by man, when he seriously cast his eyes upon it, he said, "All was vanity and affliction of spirit:" and was so discontented with his life, that he confessed it was tedious to him, and that he detested the care he had taken about it; and, envying the poor laborer, judged it was better for one to eat of what he got by the sweat of his brows. If, then, such

excess of fortune, felicity, wealth, honor and pleasure, deceived so wise a king as Solomon, who will not be deceived? What shall we expect from some little part of felicity, when this flood of fortune could not bestow a contented and quiet life? What greater argument of the scarcity and littleness of temporal goods, when all are not sufficient to fill a human heart? But as they are not the things which they seem, so they afford not what we expect, and therefore no man is content with what he has, that still appearing better which is another's.

And this proceeds from the deceit of human things, that obtaining what we desire, and not finding that satisfaction which we expected, we envy the condition of others, thinking we should there meet with that content which is not to be had at home, which seeking with much trouble, we at last come to know our error, and find their condition worse than our own. This is well expressed by antiquity, in a fiction it made, full of doctrine, wherein it feigned, that the Cretans presented a petition to Jupiter, that since he was born in their country, he would be pleased to exempt them from the troubles and labors endured by others. Jupiter answered, that this was a privilege of those who were in heaven, and could not be granted to them who lived upon earth. Whereupon they framed a second supplication, that it might be lawful for them to change and truck their labors and cares, one with another. This was granted. Whereupon, the next fair day, every one gathering up his own troubles in a bundle, and loading himself, brought them to the market-place; but began, before they bargained, to search and look into those of others, and finding them more heavy and grievous than their own, every one returned to his house as wise as he came. The remedy of afflictions is not to fly from them, but to turn to God, since they happened to us for our forsaking him. And it was a most high counsel of divine Providence, that no man should want afflictions, that so he might know his sins; and hoping only for ease and comfort in the next life, and in God, he might acknowledge and only serve him. Wherefore the prophet Osee says, that God deals with us, as a husband with a wife, who had forsaken him, and sought after strange lovers, who sowed thorns in her path, that being wounded, she might say, I will return to my first spouse; so God sows gall and wormwood in the goods of this life, that the soul, being afflicted, may repent and turn to him.

Another argument of the great deceit of temporal things is this, that the more we possess them, the more we covet them, and after the experience of their little substance and power to satisfy our hearts, yet still we desire and gape after them. It is evident that this is a great cozenage, and a certain kind of witchcraft, by which they snatch away human affections, at such a time as they

should most avoid them. Nothing satisfies, and yet we desire that which does not satisfy. How vain then are they, since, when we possess them, they content us not, yet we still desire more! Not all the power and felicity of his kingdom, nor the greatness of his palaces, nor being lord of so many cities and fields could content Achab, unless he enjoyed the little vineyard of his poor neighbor; which being denied, he fell sick with grief and melancholy, flung himself upon his bed, and for mere rage and madness forbore to eat. O goods of the earth! where is your greatness, since the wealth of a rich kingdom could not fill the heart of one man, but left it empty to desire more; and the want of one only thing had more power to afflict him, than so many goods joined together to content him? All things are as vain as this, since they cannot give us that for which we seek them; and therefore Ecclesiasticus said, "The covetous man shall not be filled with coin; and he who loves riches, shall not enjoy the fruit of them. And this is vanity."

Finally, from all that is spoken either in this or the former books, may be drawn that consolation of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (Lib. 2. in fine, p. 185.), in his philosophy, where he says, "The time of human life is a moment, the nature slippery, the senses darkened, the temperature of the whole body easily corrupted, the soul wandering, the fortune, what it shall be hard to conjecture, the fame uncertain; and to be short, those things which belong to the body have the nature of a river, and those which belong to the mind are as smoke or a dream. Life is a war and a peregrination; fame after death is forgotten. What is there, then, that can guide to security? There is nothing but philosophy, which consists in this, that thou preserve a mind without wound or stain, entire and undefiled, superior to all grief and pleasure, that thou do nothing without a good end, nothing feignedly or falsely, and that thou regard not what another man does, or has to do. Besides, that all things which happen, thou receive as sent from thence, from whence thou thyself art derived. Finally, that thou attend death with a quiet and temperate mind." This is from that great philosopher.

CHAPTER X.

The Dangers and Prejudices of Things Temporal.

THE least evil, which we receive from the goods of this world, is to deceive and frustrate our hopes; and he comes well off, whom they forsake only with a mock. For there are many, who not only fail of what they desire, but meet with what they abhor, and in place of ease and content, meet with trouble and vexation, and instead of life find death, and that which they most affect turns often to their destruction. Absalom, being very beautiful, gloried in nothing more than his hair; but even those became the instrument of his death; and those which he daily combed, as if they had been threads of gold, served as a halter to hang him upon an oak. To how many have riches, which they loved as their life, been an occasion of death! This is the calamity of the goods of the earth; which the wise man noted when he said, "Another dangerous evil I beheld under the sun, riches preserved for the destruction of their owner." This is the general and incurable infirmity of riches, that when they are possessed with affection, they turn into the ruin of their possessors, either in soul or body, and oftentimes in both; insomuch, that we are not to look upon temporal goods as vain and deceitful, but as parricides and our betrayers. With much reason the two great prophets, Isaias and Ezechiel, compare Egypt (by which is signified the world and human prosperity), to a reed, which if you lean upon it breaks, and the splinters wound your hands. No less brittle than a reed are temporal goods, but more dangerous. Besides the other faults, wherewith they may be charged, a very great one is the hurt they do to life itself, for whose good they are desired; and are commonly not only hurtful to the life eternal, but prejudicial even to the temporal. How many, for their desire to obtain them, have lost the happiness of heaven, and the quiet felicity of the earth; enduring before death a life of death, and by their cares, griefs, fears, troubles, labors and afflictions, which are caused even by the greatest abundance and felicity, before they enter into the hell of the other world, suffer a hell in this. And therefore St. John writes in his Apocalypse, that death and hell were cast into a lake of fire, because the life of sinners whom he speaks, according to the letter, is a death and hell; and he says, that this life and this hell shall be cast into the other hell; and he who places his felicity in the goods of the earth, shall pass from one death to another, and from one hell to another. Let us look upon the condition to which Aman was brought by his abundance of temporal fortunes, into so excessive a pride, that, because he was

denied a respect which was no ways due to him, he led a life of death, smothering in his breast a hell of rage, madness and hatred; nothing in this life, as he himself confessed, giving him ease or content. What condition more like death and hell than this? for, as in hell there is a privation of all joys and delights, so, oftentimes it happens in the greatest felicities upon earth. The same which Aman confessed, Dionysius felt, when he was king of Sicily; to wit, that he took no content at all in the greatest delights of his kingdom. And therefore Boetius (*Cic. Quæst. Tusc. Boet. de Consol. Philos.*) says, that if we could take away the veil from those who sit on thrones, and clad in purple, and compassed about with guards of soldiers, we should see the chains in which their souls are enthralled; conformable to which is that of Plutarch, that in name only they are princes, but in every thing else slaves. A marvellous thing it is, that a man compassed about with delights, pastimes and pleasures, should joy in nothing, and in the midst of dancing, drinking, feasting, and dainty fare, should find a hell in his heart. That in hell amongst so many torments, sinners should not find comfort, is no marvel at all; but that in this life, in the midst of felicity and affluence of all delights, he should find no satisfaction, is a great mystery. A great mischief then is human prosperity, that, amongst all its contents, it affords no room for one true one. But this is divine providence, that as the saints, who despised what was temporal, had in their souls, in the very midst of torments, a heaven of joy and pleasure, as St. Laurence, who, in the midst of flames, found a paradise in his heart; so the sinner, who neither esteems nor loves any thing besides those of the world, should also in the midst of his festivities and delights, find a life of hell and torments, anticipating that, whereinto, after death, he is to enter and be confined. So great are the cares and griefs occasioned by the goods of the earth, that they oppress those who most enjoy them, and shut up the door to all mirth, leaving them in a sad night of sorrow. This is what was represented to the prophet Zacharias, when, before the devils came to fetch away the vessel, wherein the woman was enclosed, to be carried into a strange region in the land of Sanaar, there to dwell for ever, the mouth of it was stopped up with a talent of lead, and she imprisoned in darkness and obscurity; signifying thereby, that before a worldling is snatched away by the devils, to be carried into the mournful land of hell, even in this life he is hoodwinked, and placed in so great a darkness, that he sees not one beam of the light of truth; so that no content or complete joy can ever enter into his heart.

SECTION II.

The reason why the goods of this life are troublesome and incommodious, even to life itself, is for the many dangers they draw along with them, the obligations wherein they engage us, the cares which they require, the fears which they cause, the affronts which they occasion, the straits to which they put us, the troubles which they bring along with them, the inordinate desires which accompany them, and finally, the evil conscience which they commonly have, who most esteem them. With reason did Christ, our Redeemer, call riches thorns, because they ensnare and wound us with dangers, losses, inquietness and fears. Wherefore, Job said of the rich man, "When he shall be filled, he shall be straitened, he shall burn, and all manner of grief shall fall upon him:" which St. Gregory explains in these words: "He is first troubled with a weariness, in seeking how to compass (sometimes by flattery, sometimes by terrors), what his covetousness desires; and having obtained it, the solicitude of keeping it is no less vexatious. He fears thieves, and is affrighted with the power of great ones, lest they should by violence take his wealth from him; and if he meets one in want, presently suspects he may rob him; and those very things which he has gathered together, he fears lest their own nature may consume them. Since, then, the fear of all these things is a trouble and vexation, the miserable wretch suffers in as many things as he fears." St. Chrysostom also says, that the rich man must needs want many things, because he is content with nothing, and is a slave of his avarice, still full of fears and suspicion, hated, envied, murmured at, and made the enemy of all men; whilst the poor life, which walks the king's highway, secured and guarded from thieves and enemies, is a port free from storms, a school of wisdom, and a life of peace and quietness. And in another place he says thus: "If thou shalt well consider the heart of an avaricious and covetous man, thou shalt find it like a garment spoiled and consumed by moths and ten thousand worms; so corrupted and overcome with cares, that it seems not the heart of a man." Such is not the heart of the poor, which shines like gold, is firm as a rock of diamonds, pleasant as a rose, and free from fear, thieves, cares and solitudes, lives as an angel of heaven, present only to God and his service; whose conversation is more with angels than men; whose treasure is God; not needing of any to serve him, since he only serves his Creator; whose slaves are his own thoughts and desires, over which he absolutely commands. What more precious than this? what more beautiful? But the little help, which human life receives from temporal riches, cannot be better expressed, than by that which David says: "The rich have

wanted, and were a hungered : but those who seek the Lord, shall not be defrauded of all good." If then, the abundance of wealth cannot free us from the necessities of the body, how shall they rescue us in the griefs and cares of the mind ?

Neither are honors more favorable to human life. What anguish of heart does the fear of losing them cost us, and what shifts are we put to, to preserve them ! Great are the inconveniences, which many suffer to sustain them, even to the want of necessary food. For, as Pharaoh exacted things impossible from the children of Israel, commanding that no straw should be allowed them for the burning of their bricks, and yet that the same tax and number should be imposed as before ; the same tyranny is exercised over many by the world, which takes away the stock and substance, which they formerly had to sustain themselves, and yet commands them still to maintain the same pomp and equipage which they did, when they enjoyed it ; so that many are forced by their honor (as they term it) to maintain a coach and lackeys, which they need not, when they have scarcely wherewith to feed their hungry bellies. In others, what melancholy and sadness is sometimes caused by a vain suspicion, that some have thought, or spoken ill of them ! So many are the mischiefs and vexations which this counterfeit good draws along with it, that many have given thanks to God, that he has taken this burden of honor from them, that so they might live in greater quiet and repose. Plutarch says, that if a man were offered two ways, whereof the one led to honor, and the other to death, he should choose the latter. Lucian, desiring to express it more fully, feigns that one of the gods refused his deity, because he would not be troubled with being always honored. He invents this lie, to make us believe the truth which we have spoken.

The excess also of pleasures, what miseries does it heap upon us ! what infirmities does it engender in our bodies ! what torments and resentments in our consciences ! For as he who wanders out of his way, without reflecting on it, is, by the briers, bushes, pits and unevenness of the ground, put in mind, that he had lost himself, which, although he be otherwise well accommodated, yet troubles and afflicts him ; so the ways and paths of a voluptuous man cry to him, that he goes astray, and must therefore cause a melancholy and a sadness in his heart. Well said St. Gregory (Hom. 10. in Ezechiel.), that he was a fool, who looked for joy and peace in the delights of the world ; for those are the effects of the Holy Ghost, and companions of righteousness, which are far removed from the cares and vanities of the earth. Besides, all our pleasures are so intermixed with trouble and importunities, that it is the greatest pleasure to want them. Epicurus, who was a great studier of pleasures, did, as St. Jerome writes, (Hieron. contra Jovinian.) enrich all his books

with sentences of temperance and sobriety; and he has scarce a leaf, which is not filled with pot-herbs, fruits, roots and other mean food of small trouble; the solicitude in setting forth of banquets, being greater than the delight we receive in their abuse. Diogenes, in the same manner, and other philosophers, despised pleasures as prejudicial to the commodities of life, passing for that cause their lives in great poverty. Crates flung all his goods into the sea; and Zeno was glad his were drowned with a tempest. Aristides would not admit the bounty of Calicias; and Epaminondas was content with one coat, living in poverty and temperance, to the end he might live with content and honor, and free from necessities, which are often greater amongst the rich than the poor. Riches make not their masters rich, who live in perpetual covetousness, and are never satisfied with their coffers. Wherefore the Holy Ghost, speaking of those who are called rich, and of the poor of the gospel, says, those are, as it were, rich, and enjoy nothing, and these are, as it were, poor and possess all things. For which reason St. Gregory noted, that our Saviour Christ called not the riches of the world absolutely riches, but false and deceitful riches; false, in regard they cannot continue long with us; deceitful, because they cannot satisfy the necessities of life.

SECTION III.

It is more to be feared, when the goods of this life cause the evils of the other, and that they not only rob us of the content of the present, but occasion the torments of the future, and, after one hell in this life, throw us down into another after death. Well said St. Jerome in one of his epistles, that it was a difficult thing to enjoy both the goods present and to come, to pass from temporal pleasures to eternal, and to be great both here and there; for he who places his whole felicity in pampering himself here, will be tormented hereafter; and he who is unjustly flattered and honored here, shall be justly scorned and despised there. This was well declared by St. Vincent Ferrer, in a comparison of the falcon and the hen. The hen, whilst she lives, seeks her food in the dirt and dunghills, and at best feeds now and then upon some bran or light corn; the falcon, on the contrary, is cherished, carried upon his master's fist, and fed with the brains of birds and partridges; but after death they change their conditions; for the falcon is flung upon the dunghill, and the hen served to the table of kings. As Jacob changed his hands, placing his right hand upon his grandchild, who stood upon his left side, and his left hand upon him who stood upon the right, preferring the younger before the elder; so God uses to change his hands after death, and prefer the younger, who are the poor and despised in this life. For

this Christ, our Redeemer, pronounces so many woes against the rich of this world. Wo be unto you rich; who rejoice in this world; ye shall weep in the next: Wo be unto you who are now filled; you shall hunger hereafter: Wo be unto them, who have their heaven here; it is to be feared, a hell will succeed it. Let us tremble at what was spoken to the rich glutton: Thou didst receive pleasure in this life; and for this, eternal evils succeeded thee after death; changing hands with poor Lazarus, who received evils in this life, and after death enjoyed the pleasures of the other. The rich man, who wanted not abundance of precious wines in this life, wanted a drop of water to cool his tongue in the next; and Lazarus, who here wanted the crumbs of bread that fell from his table, was feasted with the supper of eternal happiness. The prophet Jeremiah writes, that Nabuzardan carried away the rich captives to Babylon, and left the poor in Jerusalem; as the devil carries away the slaves and lovers of riches to Babylon, which is the confusion of hell, and leaves the poor in spirit in Jerusalem, which is the vision of peace, that they may there enjoy the clear sight of God.

The felicity of temporal goods blots out of our memories the greatness of the eternal; it makes us forget God, and the happiness of the other life; it blinds those who possess them, busies them wholly in things of the earth, and gives them those means and opportunities for vices, which the poor have not, who either work, or serve their masters, or pray. Wherefore the enjoying of temporal goods is so dangerous, that St. Paul calls riches "the snares of the devil." And if in all snares there be falsehood and danger, how false and dangerous must be the snares of Satan? Even Diogenes was aware of this truth, and therefore calls them "a vail of malice and perdition." St. Jerome says, that anciently there were two notable proverbs in prejudice of the rich: The first, that he, who was very rich, could not be a good man; the second, that he, who was rich, had either been a bad man, or was the heir of a bad man; and admonishes us, that the name of rich, in the Holy Scripture, is most commonly taken in an ill sense; and on the contrary, in a favorable that of the poor. The truth is, that the Holy Scripture is full of contumelies against the rich of this world; and above all, the Son of God, who uttered most notable and fearful expressions against those who abound in temporal goods; and therefore, when he taught the beatitudes, he gave the first of them to the poor; and in preaching the woes, he gave the first to the rich; and, upon another occasion, said it was impossible for the rich to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And although he was willing to mitigate so hard a sentence, yet he said it was difficult, and so difficult, as might make the rich of the world tremble; for he assures us it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the

kingdom of heaven. But with God nothing is impossible. From all that has been said may be gathered, how worthy of contempt and hatred are all temporal goods, since they deprive us not only of our content in this life, but of our felicity in the other, and even of God himself. What implacable hatred would a faithful and honest spouse conceive against the traitor, who, counterfeiting the shape and habit of her husband, should violate her chastity? how would she abhor him, when she knew the injury he had done her, in a matter of that importance? In the same manner are we betrayed by temporal felicity, which appearing to us in the likeness of the true happiness, makes our hearts to adulterate with it, and leave our lawful spouse, and true good indeed, which is God. For certainly, there is no perfect felicity, but in his service, and compliance with his holy will in this life, that we may enjoy him eternally in the next; and therefore, temporal goods, which by their deceit cozen us, and make us lose the eternal, ought not to be loved and followed, but hated as a thousand deaths.

THE
FOURTH BOOK
OF THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TEMPORAL AND
ETERNAL.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Greatness of Things Eternal.

ALTHOUGH the littleness and baseness of things temporal be in themselves such as we have already seen, yet to him who shall consider the greatness and majesty of the eternal, whereof we now begin to treat, they will appear much less, and more contemptible. For such is the greatness of that glory, that St. Austin (Augus. in Man.) makes use of these words: "If it were requisite every day to suffer torments, or to remain in hell itself for some long time, to the end we might behold Christ in his glory, and enjoy the company of saints, were it much to suffer what is grievous and painful upon earth, that we might be partakers of so great a happiness?" which speech of St. Austin is not to be taken as an exaggeration; as neither that, which is attributed to St. Jerome; that it is a wonder, that the stones, under the feet of those who shall be damned, convert not into roses, as an anticipated solace of those evils which they are to suffer; and that, on the contrary, those under the feet of these, who are to be saved, turn not into thorns, to wound and chastise them for their sins, since, for so short troubles, they are to receive unspeakable joys. This greatness of eternal goodness consists not only in the eternity of their duration, but in their extension also, as being supreme and without limit in their excellency. And therefore, we ought not to think much at the suffering of a thousand years' torments, if for them we might obtain those blessings, but for one day. Whereupon St. Austin (Augus. de lib. arb. 3.) says, "Such is the beauty of righteousness, such the joy of that eternal light, of that immutable truth and wisdom, that although we were not to continue in it above one day, yet for so short a time, a thousand years in this

life, replenished with delights, and abundance of all goods temporal, were justly to be despised. For it was not spoken amiss, that better is one day in thy courts above a thousand." So that whereas, it is commonly said, that for eternal joys, we ought to leave the temporal and frail goods of the earth, which are short and transitory; St. Austin says, that if those of heaven were short, and these of earth eternal, yet we ought to forsake these for those.

This is confirmed by that which is written by Thomas de Cantiprato (Lib. 2. c. 57. N. 67.) and others; that the devil being questioned by an exorcist, what he would suffer to see God; answered, that he would suffer all that the damned in hell, men and devils were to suffer, until the day of judgment, only that he might enjoy the sight of him but for some short time. How can we then complain of the short troubles of this life, which are to be recompensed with the clear vision of God for ever, when his professed enemy would suffer so much, only to enjoy it for an instant? Cato having only read that discourse of Socrates, concerning the immortality of the soul, thought it nothing to part with this life, and tear his bowels in pieces, that he might enjoy that eternal liberty of the soul, freed from the incumbrances and oppressions of the body. Heroldus writes (J. Herol. in Prom. Exem.) that friar Jordan, general of the holy order of the preaching friars, exorcising a possessed person, the devil, amongst other answers to his demands, told him, that he had never seen the face of God, but only during the twinkling of an eye; and that to see it so much longer, he would willingly suffer all the pains of his companions, until the day of judgment. Friar Jordan remained astonished at this answer, and recalling himself a little, he said to him: Thou hast said well; but declare to me this beauty, by some similitude or representation. Thou hast moved a foolish question, replied the spirit; for there is no expressing of it. But to give some satisfaction to thy desire, I say, that if the beauties of all creatures, heaven, earth, flowers, pearls and all other things, that can give any delight to the sight, were all comprised in one only thing; if every one of the stars yielded as much light as the sun, and the sun shined as bright, as all they together; all this united so together, would be in respect of the beauty of God Almighty, as a dark pitchy night, in respect of the clearest and brightest day. Where by the way it is to be observed, that the devils never saw God clearly, as the angels in glory now behold him, but only, by the excellency of their nature, attained to some particular and advantageous knowledge of his beauty and divine perfections, and joy, which resulted from that knowledge. And if to enjoy that once again for so short a time, they would endure those torments for so long a space, what shall it be to behold him clearly in his glory? Certainly to be roasted, plucked in pieces with pincers, to be burned alive for a thousand years, were well

employed to enjoy that felicity but for a day. What shall it be to possess it for an eternity, when the joy also of each day shall be equivalent to many years? Wherefore Johannes Major (Joh. Major, Ex. 14.) reports that a certain monk being at matins, with the other religious of his monastery, and coming to that verse of the psalm (Ex. Coll. Ps. lxxxix.), where it is said, "A thousand years in the presence of God are but as yesterday," which is already past, began to imagine with himself, how it might be possible; and remaining in the choir (as his manner was) after the end of matins, to perfect his devotions, he humbly besought the Lord to grant him the true understanding of that place; which he had no sooner done, but he perceived a little bird in the choir; that with flying up and down before him, by little and little, with her melodious singing, insensibly drew him out of the church, into a wood not far off, where perching herself upon a bough, she for some short time, as it seemed to him, continued her music, to the unspeakable delight of the monk, and then flew away, leaving him, by her absence, no less sad and pensive. But seeing she came no more, he returned back, thinking he had left his monastery the same morning, immediately after matins, and that it was now about the third hour; but coming to the convent, which was near the wood, he found the gate, by which he was accustomed to enter, to be closed up, and another opened in some other part, where calling upon the porter, he was asked who he was, from whence he came, and what was his business. He answered, that he was the sacristan of the church, and that having that morning gone abroad after matins, he found all things at his return changed. The porter demanded of him the name of the abbot, the prior, the procurator. He named them all, and wondered he was neither understood nor permitted to enter, and when they feigned not to know those religious, whom he mentioned, desired to be brought to the abbot: but coming into his presence, neither the abbot knew him nor he the abbot; whereat the good monk, being much astonished, knew not what to say or do. The abbot asked him his name, and that of his abbot; and turning the annals of the monastery, found it was more than three hundred years since the death of those persons whom he named. Whereupon the monk making a relation of what had happened to him concerning the psalm, they acknowledged him, and admitted him as a brother into their profession, where, having received the sacraments of the church, he with much peace ended his days in our Lord.

If the pleasure of one sense did so ravish the soul of this servant of God, what shall it be, when not only the hearing, but the sight, smell, taste, the whole body and soul shall be drowned in joys proportionable to the senses of the one, and power of the other? If the music of a little bird did so transport him, what shall the music of angels? what shall the clear vision of God?

what shall God himself do, when he makes ostentation, if so I may say, of his omnipotency? For as Assuerus, who reigned from India to Æthiopia, over a hundred and seventy provinces, made a great feast for all his princes, which lasted a hundred and eighty-one days; so shall this King of heaven and earth make his great supper of glory, which shall last for all eternity, for the setting forth of his majesty, and for the honor and entertainment of his servants; where the joys shall be such, as neither the eye hath seen, nor the ear hath heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man. O baseness of temporal goods! what proportion do they hold with this greatness, since they are so poor, that even time, from whence they have their being, makes them tedious, and not to be endured? Who could continue a whole month, without other diversion, in hearing the choicest music? nay, who could pass a day free from weariness, without some change of pleasures? But such is the greatness of those joys which God has prepared for those who love and fear him, that we shall still desire them afresh, and they will not cloy us in a whole eternity.

SECTION II.

St. Anselm (Anselm. lib. de Simil.) observes this difference between the goods and evils of this life and the other; that in this life neither of them are pure, but mixed and confused. The goods are imperfect, and mingled with many evils; and the evils short, and mingled with some good. But in the other life, as the goods are most perfect and pure, without the least touch of any ill, and so can never weary us (for that were an evil); so on the contrary, those evils of hell, in which there is no good at all, are horrible and above all sufferance.

Eternal glory therefore is great, both in respect of its purity, being free from any ill, and in respect of its perfection, being highly and excellently good. David said, that God had removed our sins from us, as far as the east is distant from the west; which he has not only verified in the guilt of sin, but in the punishment, which is as far removed from the blessed, as heaven is from earth. And although the spiritual distance between them be greater than the corporal, yet that we may from hence form some conception of that also, we will say as much as our weakness is able to attain to of this. Our famous mathematician, Christopher Clavius (Clavius in Sphær. c. 1.), says, that from the sphere of the moon, which is the lowest heaven to the earth, are one hundred and twenty thousand, six hundred and thirty miles; and from the heaven of the sun, four millions, thirty-thousand, nine hundred and twenty-three miles; and from the firmament, or eighth heaven, one hundred and sixty-one millions, eight hundred and eighty-four thousand, nine hundred and forty-three miles. Here

Plato wills the mathematicians to cease their inquiry ; for from hence there is no rule of measuring further ; but, without all doubt, it is much farther from thence to the imperial heaven. For the only thickness of the starry sphere is said to contain as much as the whole space between that and the earth : inso-much, that if a millstone were thrown from the highest of the firmament, and every hour should fall two hundred miles, it would be ninety years before it arrived at the earth. The mathematicians also, and some learned interpreters of the Scripture, affirm, that the distance from the earth to the highest of the firmament, is less than from thence to the lowest of the imperial heaven ; and therefore conclude, if one should live two thousand years, and every day should travel a hundred miles, he should not in all that time reach the lowest of the firmament ; and if, after that, he should also travel other two thousand years, he should not reach the highest of it ; and from thence four thousand years, before he arrived at the lowest of the imperial heaven. O power of the grace of Jesus Christ, which makes us in a moment despatch so great a journey ! That noble matron who was tormented and put to death in England, said to those who with grief and horror beheld her martyrdom, " So short is the way which brings us to heaven, that within six hours I shall mount above the sun and moon, tread the stars under my feet, and enter into the heaven of the blessed." But there was no need of six hours ; one little instant brings the souls of the blessed thither ; which being purified from their sins and pains, remain further distant from the one and the other, than heaven is from earth. Proportionable to this distance of place is the advantage which the greatness of heaven has above that of earth ; and the same holds in their blessings. Let us mount then with this consideration thither, and from that height let us despise all this mutable world, since even the gentiles did it. Wherefore Ptolomy (Ptolom. in Præf. Almagest.) said, " He is higher than the world, who cares not in whose hands the world is." And Cicero (Tull. in Som. Scip.), " What human thing can seem great to him, to whom eternity and the greatness of the other world are known ? All the earth seems so little to me, that I am sorry and ashamed of our empire, with which we have only touched some little part of it." All the kingdoms of the earth are but as a point, and to Boetius seemed but as a point of a point. But of heaven Baruch could say, " How great is the house of God ! how large is the place of his possession ! It is great, and hath no need : high and immeasurable." So great is the advantage of things eternal above temporal, although they were not eternal. O what fools then are they, who for one point of earth lose so many leagues of heaven ! who for one short pleasure, lose things so immense and durable ! O the greatness of the

omnipotency and goodness of the divine liberality, which has prepared such things for the humble and little ones who serve him! St. Austin, whose thoughts were so sublime, and whose understanding was one of the greatest in the world, found himself unable to express them, nay even to think of them. For being desirous to write of eternal glory, and taking pen in hand, he beheld in his chamber a great light, and felt a sweetness so fragrant, as almost transported him; and withal, heard a voice, which said, "Austin, what dost thou mean? Dost thou think it possible to number the drops of the sea, or to grasp the whole compass of the earth, or to make the celestial bodies suspend their motion? That which no eyes have seen, wouldst thou behold? that which no ear hath heard, wouldst thou conceive? that which no heart hath attained, nor human understanding imagined, dost thou think that thou only canst comprehend? What end can that have which is infinite? how can that be measured which is immense? Sooner shall all those impossibilities be possible, than thou understand the least part of that glory, which is enjoyed by the blessed in heaven." If one, who had been always bred in an obscure dungeon, and never had seen other light, than that of some dim lamp, were told, that above the earth there was a sun, which enlightened the whole world, and cast his beams far above a hundred thousand leagues in circumference, all the discourses which could be made to such a one, would hardly make him conceive the brightness and beauty of the sun; much less can the glory of those things of the other world be made to appear to us, though exemplified by comparisons of the greatest beauty the world affords. So ineffable blessings are contemned by a sinner, and all to make himself despicable and accursed.

SECTION III.

After the same manner, the evils and pains of this world are nothing comparable to those which are eternal; and, therefore, as the three hundred years' enjoying of one heavenly pleasure seemed to that servant of God no longer than three hours; so, on the contrary, three hours of eternal pains will appear to the damned, as three hundred years, and much more; since even of the temporal pains in purgatory, this notable accident is written by St. Antoninus. (St. Anton. p. 4. s. 4.) A man of an evil life was visited by our Lord with a long infirmity, to the end he might repent and reflect upon his sins; which took effect. But his sickness, by continuance, grew so grievous and tedious to him, that he often, with great earnestness, recommended himself to God, and besought him to deliver him from the prison of his body. Whereupon an angel appeared to him, with this choice: either to continue two years sick in that manner he was, and then to go straight to heaven; or to die instantly, and remain

three days in purgatory. He was not long in his election, but presently chose the latter, and immediately died; but he had not been an hour in those pains, when the same angel appeared to him again, and after some encouragement and consolation, demanded, if he knew him? He answered, "No." "I am (said he) the angel who brought thee that choice from heaven, either to come hither, or to remain in thy infirmity for two years." To whom the afflicted soul replied: "It is impossible thou shouldst be the angel of the Lord; for good angels cannot lie; and that angel told me, I should remain in this place but three days, and it is now so many years that I have suffered those most bitter torments, and can yet see no end of my misery." "Know, then (said the angel), that it is not yet an hour, since thou ledest thy body, and the rest of the three days yet remain for thee to suffer." To whom the soul replied: "Pray to the Lord for me, that he look not upon my ignorance in making so foolish a choice; but that out of his divine mercy he will give me leave to return once more to life, and I will not only patiently suffer those two years, but as many as it shall please him to impose upon me." His petition was granted, and being restored to life, his experience of purgatory made all the pains of his infirmity seem light to him; so that he endured them not only with patience, but joy. Much like this (as it appears in the Chronicles of the Minorites) happened to a religious person of the order of St. Francis (Chron. S. Fran. 2. p. l. 4. c. 8.), who demanded the same of God Almighty, in regard of the much trouble he put his religious brethren to, as also for what he suffered himself. An angel appeared to him, and gave him his choice, either of suffering one day in purgatory, or remaining a whole year longer sick as he was. He made choice to die presently, and had scarce been one hour in purgatory, when he began to complain of the angel for having deceived him. The angel appeared to him again, telling him, that his body was not yet buried, because there was one only hour past since his death. He gave him his choice the second time. His soul was presently re-united to the body, and he rose out of his bed to the great astonishment of all. If this, then, pass in purgatory, it will not be less in hell; and if an hour seem a year, which contains above eleven thousand hours, an eternity in hell will appear eleven thousand eternities. O how dearly bought are the short pleasures of the senses, which are paid for with so long and so innumerable torments! For if pain should last no longer than the pleasure that deserved it, it would seem to those who are to feel it, ten thousand times longer; what will it do, being eternal? O pains of this world, infirmities, griefs and troubles, how ridiculous are you compared with those which are eternal! since the time which you endure is but short, and it is not much that you can afflict us; nay, if by temporal punishment we may escape the eternal, you are most happy to us, and ought to be received with a thousand welcomes.

CHAPTER II.

The Greatness of the eternal Honor of the Just.

LET us now, in particular, consider the greatness of those goods of the other life, in which are contained honors, riches, pleasure, and all the blessings both of soul and body; of each whereof we shall say something apart, and will begin with that of honor. Certainly, the reward of honor, which shall be conferred upon the just in the other life, is to be wonderful great: First, in respect, that amongst all the appetites of a reasonable creature, that of honor is the most potent and prevalent. 2dly, because our Saviour exhorts us to humility, as the way by which we are to enter into glory, and promises honors and exaltations to the humble; and there is no question, but in that place of satiety, remuneration, and accomplishment of all that can be desired, the honor of the servants of Christ and followers of his humility shall be inexpressible, of which there are many promises in holy Scripture. He himself says, that his Father will honor them in heaven; and David sings, "Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor;" and Ecclesiasticus (as it is applied by the church), "A crown of gold upon his head, graven with the seal of holiness, and the glory of honor." Besides, all the tribute, which those who serve God are able to pay him, is only to laud and honor him. His eternal joy, happiness, and all his intrinsical perfections are so excellent, that they can receive no addition; only this glory and honor, as they are an exterior good, are capable of augmentation. And this is that which he receives from the saints who serve him; with which God is so pleased, that he pays them again in the same money, and honors those who honored him: and this honor arrives at that height, that Christ himself expresses it in these words: "He who shall overcome, I will give him to sit with me in my throne; even as I have overcome, and have sitten with the Father in his throne." At the greatness of which promise, a doctor (Bell. l. 1. de æterna felicit. c. 4. in.), being amazed, cries out, "How great shall be that glory, when a just soul shall, in the presence of an infinite number of angels, sit in the same throne with Christ, and shall, by the just sentence of God, be praised for a conqueror over the world, and the invisible powers of hell! And how shall that soul rejoice, when it shall see itself, being freed from all dangers and troubles, to triumph over all its enemies! What can it desire more, than to be partaker of all those divine goods, and even to accompany Christ in the same throne? O how cheerfully do they combat upon earth! O how easily do they bear all afflictions for Christ, who with a lively faith and certain hope, apprehended so sublime

honors!" Certainly, with much reason may the happiness of saints be called by the name of glory, since the honor which they receive is so transcendent. What an honor shall that be, when the just in the other life shall receive no less a recompense of his holiness than God himself! The nature of honor is to be a reward of virtue; and by how much greater the reward is, which a powerful king bestows upon some valorous captain, by so much greater is the honor which he confers upon him. What honor shall it then be, when God shall give to those who have served him, not only to tread upon the stars, to inhabit the palaces of heaven, to be lords of the world; but, transcending all that is created, and finding amongst his whole riches nothing sufficient to reward them, shall give them his own infinite essence to enjoy, not for a day, but to all eternity! The highest honor which the Romans bestowed upon their greatest captains, was to grant them a day of triumph, and in that permission to wear a crown of grass or leaves, which withered the day following. O most honored virtue of Christians, whose triumph shall be eternal, and whose never-fading crown is God himself! O most happy diadem of the just! O most precious garland of the saints, which is of as great worth and value, as is God! Sapo, king of the Persians, was most ambitious of honor, and would therefore be called the brother of the sun and moon, and friend to the planets. This vain prince erected a most glorious throne, which he placed on high, and therefore sat in great majesty, having under his feet a certain globe of glass, whereon were artificially represented the motions of the sun, the moon and stars; and to sit crowned above this fantastical heaven, he esteemed as a great honor. What shall be then the honor of the just, who truly and really shall sit above the sun, the moon and firmament, crowned by the hand of God himself? If the applause of men, and the good opinion which they have from others, be esteemed an honor, what shall be the applause of heaven, and the good opinion, not only of saints and angels, but of God himself, whose judgments cannot err? David took it for a great honor, that the daughter of his king was judged as a reward of his valor. God surpasses this, and honors so much the service of his elect, that he pays their merits with no less a reward than himself. O happy labor of the victorious and glorious combat of the just, against the vices and temptations of the world, whose victory deserves so inestimable a crown! Clemens Alexandrinus reports, that there were in Persia three mountains; he, who came to the first, heard, as it were, afar off, the noise and voice of those who were fighting; he who attained to the second, heard perfectly the cries and clamor of soldiers, engaged in the fury of a battle; but he who attained to the third, heard nothing but the joyful acclamations of a victory. This happens really with the just, who are likewise

to pass three mystical mountains, which are, reason, grace, and glory. He who arrives at the knowledge of reason, gives an alarm to vice, which he combats and overcomes by grace, and in glory celebrates his victory, with the joy and applause of all the inhabitants of heaven, and is crowned as a conqueror, with such a crown as we have already spoken of.

SECTION II.

Besides this, he who is most known, and is praised and celebrated for good and virtuous, by the greatest multitude, is esteemed the most glorious and honorable person. But all this world is a solitude, in respect of the citizens of heaven, where innumerable angels approve and praise the virtuous actions of the saints; and they likewise are nothing, and all creatures, men and angels, but as a solitary wilderness in respect of the Creator. What comparison between that honor which may be given by some particular kingdom, or by all Europe, and that which shall be heaped upon the just, by all the blessed men and angels; nay, even by the damned and devils in the day of judgment? What is the approbation of a created understanding in respect of the Divine? What man so glorious upon earth, whose worth and valor has been known to all? Those who were born before him, could not know him; no more shall many of those who are to follow him. But the predestinate in heaven shall be known by all, past and to come, by all the angels, and by the King of men and angels. Human fame is founded upon the applause of mortal men, who besides being less than angels, may be deceived, may lie, and are most part of them sinners and wicked. How far then must that honor exceed it, which is conferred upon the just by the holy angels, and by those blessed and pure souls, who cannot be deceived themselves, nor will deceive us! If we esteem it more to be honored by the kings of the earth, by the great men of the world, and by the learned in universities, than by the barbarous and ignorant peasants of some poor village, how ought we then to value the honor, which shall be bestowed upon us by the saints in heaven, who are the kings and grandees of the court of God, and are all replenished with most perfect and divine wisdom! All the honor of men is ridiculous, and his ambition no wiser, who seeks it, than, as St. Anselm says (*Lib. de Sim. c. 65.*), if one worm should desire to be honored by another. All the earth is but as a village, or rather as some poor cottage in respect of heaven. Let us not therefore strive for a name upon earth, but that our names may be written in heaven; in comparison whereof it is too much to say, that the earth is a point, as Seneca called it (*Lib. 2. de Consol.*); and therefore, Boetius proves, that it is less, and says, "If from this little particle of

earth, you shall take what seas, lakes, and uninhabited places, full of wild beasts, take up, you shall leave to men but a narrow dwelling. Being therefore penned up in so small a point of a point, how canst thou think to extend thy renown and publish thy name?" Compare the honor of heaven with that of earth, and thou shalt find the difference between them to be as great, as is their distance. Of this incomparable honor in heaven, have been some revelations of great comfort. It was revealed to St. Gertrude, that, as often as St. Joseph was named here upon earth, all the blessed in heaven made a low bow. What greater honor can be expected? What comparison can all the expressions of respect, and adorations of all the men in this world, have with one only inclination and reverence, expressed by one saint of heaven? What then shall be a reverence exhibited by them altogether? The church says of St. Martin, that at his entrance into heaven he was received with celestial hymns, that is, with songs, which the blessed sung in praise of his prowess and victory. If Saul thought the honor too much, which was given to David by the damsels, when they celebrated his victory in their songs, what shall it be to be celebrated by all the saints and angels, in celestial responsories? Cardinal Bellarmine (*Bellar. de æter. felic. lib. 4. c. 2.*) conceives, that when a servant of God enters into heaven, he shall be received with such music, all the blessed in heaven often repeating these words in the gospel: "Well done, good servant and true; because thou hast been faithful in a few things, thou shalt be placed over much; enter into thy Lord's joy;" which words they shall repeat in choirs. This shall be a song of victory, an honor above all the honors of the earth, conferred by so great, so wise, so holy, and so authentic persons. Whereupon St. Austin (*Lib. 22. de Civit. c. 30.*) said, "There shall be the true glory, where none shall be praised by the error or flattery of the praiser; and there the true honor, which shall neither be denied to the worthy, nor granted to the unworthy."

SECTION III.

Although the honor and applause, which the just receive in heaven from the citizens of that holy city, be incomparable, yet that honor and respect, with which God himself shall treat them, is far above it. Christ, our Redeemer, to express it, uses no meaner similitude, than that of the honor done by the servant to his lord; and therefore says, that God himself shall, as it were, serve the blessed in heaven at their table. It is much amongst men to be seated at the table of a prince; but for a king to serve his vassal, as if he himself were his servant, who ever heard it? Certainly, with much reason David said to God, that his servants were too much honored. And the same David, when he caused

Miphiboseth (although the grandchild of a king, and the son of an excellent prince, to whom David owed his life) to sit at his table, he thought he did him a singular honor ; but his favor never extended to wait on him. A man, who was the most proud and ambitious man in the world, could not think of a greater honor from king Assuerus, than to ride through the streets mounted upon the king's own horse, and that the greatest man in the kingdom should lead him by the bridle ; but that the king himself should perform that service, never entered into his imagination. The honor which God bestows upon the just exceeds all human imagination, who, not satisfied with crowning all the blessed with his own divinity, giving himself to be possessed and enjoyed by them for all eternity, does also honor their victories and heroic actions with new crowns. Thomas de Cantiprato (Lib. 10. Apum.) writes of Alexander, brother to St. Matilda, and son to the king of the Scots, that he appeared to a certain monk with two crowns, and being demanded why he had them doubled, " This which I wear upon my head, is common to me, with all the blessed : but that which I carry in my hand, is given me for renouncing my kingdom upon earth." But above all, the martyrs, virgins, and doctors shall appear most glorious, whom God shall honor with certain particular marks of honor, by which they shall be known and distinguished from the rest of the blessed ; which seals and marks shall be imprinted in their souls, like the indelible characters of baptism, confirmation and priesthood, which are to endure for all eternity. Of the doctors the prophet Daniel says, " They shall shine like the stars in the firmament ;" giving us to understand, that as the stars excel the other parts of the firmament, by the advantage of their light ; so the doctors shall be known in heaven, by a more glorious splendor, which they shall cast from them. And if the least saint in heaven shall shine seven times more than the sun, what shall that light be, which shall outshine so many suns ? Of the martyrs St. John says, that they went clothed in white, carrying palms in their hands in sign of victory. For as kings are honored by wearing purple and holding sceptres ; so conquerors, by their white garments and palms. The same St. John also says of virgins, that the name of Christ and his Father shall be imprinted in their foreheads ; which shall be as a token to distinguish them from the rest of the saints, conformable to that of the prophet Isaias, who says, that a more noble and excellent name shall be given to virgins, than to the rest of the sons of God ; by which name St. Augustine says, is meant some particular device, which shall distinguish them from the rest ; as the more eminent men are distinguished from others, by their several titles of honor. Besides this, those members of the blessed, by which they have more especially served God, or suffered for him, shall (as St. Austin notes) cast forth some particular light and

splendor ; so as every wound, which St. Stephen received from his stoning, shall cast forth a particular beam of light. And with what a garment of glory shall St. Bartholomew be clad, who was flayed from head to foot ! In the like manner, St. James Intercisus, who was hacked in pieces, member by member, for the faith of Christ. Even the confessors, in those senses which they have mortified for Christ, shall have a particular enamel of light. St. John the Evangelist was shown to St. Matilda, with a particular splendor and glory in his eyes, for not daring to lift them to look upon our Blessed Lady, when he lived with her, for the great esteem and reverence he bore to her. There is no kind of honor, which shall not then be given to the heroical acts of virtue, performed by the saints in this life, which shall be to be read in the particular persons of the predestinate ; so as there shall be no necessity of histories, annals, or statues, to make known or eternize their memories, as here in worldly honors, which being short, transitory, and of small endurance, have need of something to preserve them in the memory of men. For this, the Romans erected statues to those whom they intended to honor, because, being mortal, there should something remain after death, to make their persons and services, which they had done to the commonwealth, known to posterity. But in heaven there is no need of this artifice ; because those who are there honored are immortal, and shall have in themselves some character engraved, as an evident and clear testimony of their noble victories and achievements. The honor of the just in heaven depends not, like that of the earth, upon accidents and reports, nor is exposed to dangers, or measured by the discourse of others, but in itself contains its own glory and dignity. The dignities in the Roman empire, as may be gathered from the civil law (Cujac. ad tit. de dignit.), were four, expressed by these four titles : *Perfectissimus*, *Clarissimus*, *Spectabilis*, and *Illustris* ; most Perfect, most Clear, Specious, and Illustrious. These honors were only in name and reputation, not in substance and truth. For he was often called most perfect, who was indiscreet, foolish, passionate and imperfect : he most clear, who had neither clearness nor serenity of understanding, but was infected with dark and obscure vices : those specious and beautiful, from whom a man would fly twenty leagues rather than behold them ; and those illustrious, who were enveloped in the darkness of vice and ignorance, without the least light of virtue. That we may therefore see the difference between the honors of heaven, and those of the earth, which are as far distant from one another, as truth from falsehood, we must know, that in heaven the blessed are not only called most perfect, but really are so both in soul and body, without the least imperfection or defect ; are not only called most clear, but are so ; each one being adorned with that gift of brightness, that they shall cast

out beams more clear than the sun ; and if the sun be the most bright thing in nature, what shall they be who seven times out-shine it ? Nor shall they be only said to be *spectabilis*, or specious, and worthy to be looked upon ; but their beauty and comeliness shall be such, as shall not only draw the eyes of all to behold them, but shall stir up their affections to love and admire them. In the like manner, they shall not be titularly, but really illustrious ; for every one, with his own light, shall be sufficient to illustrate and enlighten many worlds. If one only false title of those, which are truly enjoyed by the blessed, were capable of making the Roman empire respect and honor the possessor, what shall the truth and substance of them all do in heaven ? With reason did Mathathias call the glory of this world dung and filth ; because all honors and dignities of the earth, in respect of those in heaven, are base, vile and despicable. What greater honor than to be friends of God, sons, heirs and kings in the realms of heaven ? St. John, in his Apocalypse, sets forth this honor of the blessed in the twenty-four elders, who were placed about the throne of God, and in that honor and majesty, as every one was seated in his presence and that upon a throne, clothed in white and lucid garments, in sign of their perpetual joy, and crowned with a crown of gold, in respect of their dignities. To be covered in the presence of kings, is the greatest honor they confer upon the chiefest grandees ; but God causes his servants to be crowned and seated upon thrones before him ; and our Saviour, in the day of judgment, makes his disciples his fellow-judges.

SECTION IV.

Certainly greater honor cannot be imagined, than that of the predestinate. For if we look upon him, who honors ; it is God : if with what ; with no less joy than his own dignity, and other most sublime gifts : if before whom ; before the whole theatre of heaven now, and in the day of judgment, before heaven, earth, angels, men, and devils ; if the continuance ; for all eternity ; if the titles which he gives them ; it is the truth and substance of the things, not the empty word and vain name. By all this may appear the cause, why eternal happiness, being a mass and an assembly of all goods imaginable, yet is called (by way of excellence) by the name of glory ; because, although it contain all pleasures, contents, joys, riches, and what can be desired, yet it seems the glory and honor, which God bestows upon the just, exceeds all the other. The honor which God gives in heaven to glorious souls, may be seen by that which he gives to their worm-eaten bones upon earth. Whereof St. Chrysostom speaks in these words (In 2. ad Corinth. Hom. 26.) : " Where is now the sepulchre of the great Alexander ? Show it me, I beseech thee,

and tell me the day whereon he died. The sepulchres of the servants of Christ are so famous, that they possess the most royal and imperial city of the world, and the day whereon they died, is known and observed as a festival by all. The sepulchre of Alexander is unknown even to his own countrymen; but that of these is known to the very barbarians. Besides, the sepulchres of the servants of Christ excel in splendor and magnificence the palaces of kings, not only in respect of the beauty and sumptuousness of their buildings, wherein they also exceed, but, which is much more, in the reverence and joy of those who repair to them. For even he, who is clothed in purple, frequents their tombs, and humbly kisses them, and laying aside his majesty and pomp, supplicates their prayers and assistance with God Almighty; he who wears a diadem taking a fisherman, and a maker of tents, for his patrons and protectors." What miracles has not God wrought by the relics of his servants, and what prodigies have not been effected by their bodies? St. Chrysostom writes (Chrysost. in Ser. de Juven. et Max.) of St. Juventius and St. Maximus, that their bodies, after death, cast forth such beams of light, that the eyes of those who were present, were not able to suffer them. Sulpicius Severus (Sever. in Ep. Socrum) writes of St. Martin, that his dead body remained in a manner glorified, that his flesh was pure as crystal, and white as milk. What wonders did God work by the bodies of St. Edward the king, and St. Francis Xavier, preserving them incorrupted for so many years! And if he does those great things with their bodies, which are under the earth, what will he do with their souls, which are above the heavens; and what with them both, when their glorious bodies shall arise, and, after the day of judgment, united to their souls, enter in triumph into the holy and eternal city of God!

CHAPTER III.

Of the Riches of the eternal Kingdom of Heaven.

THE riches in heaven are no less than the honors, though those, as has been said, are inestimable. There can be no greater riches than to want nothing that is good, nor to need any thing that can be desired; and in that blessed life no good shall fail; nor any desire be unsatisfied. And if, as the philosophers say, he is not rich who possesses much, but he who desires nothing; there being in heaven no desire unaccomplished, there must needs be great riches. It was also a position of the Stoics, that he was not poor who wanted, but he who was necessitated. Since, then, in the celestial kingdom there is necessity of nothing, most rich is he

who enters into it. By reason of these divine riches, Christ, our Saviour, when he speaks in his parables of the kingdom of heaven, often expresses it under names and enigmas of things that are rich ; sometimes calling it the hidden treasure, and sometimes the precious pearl, and other times the lost drachma. For if divine happiness consist in the eternal possession of God, what riches may be compared to his who enjoys him, and what inheritance to that of the kingdom of heaven ? What jewel more precious than the Divinity, and what gold more pure than the Creator of gold, and all things precious, who gives himself for a possession and riches to the saints, to the end they should abhor those riches which are temporal, if by them the eternal are endangered ? Let not, therefore, those who are to die to-morrow, afflict themselves for that which may perish sooner than they. Let them not toil to enjoy that, which they are shortly to leave ; nor let them with more fervor pray for those things which are transitory, than those which are eternal ; preferring the creature before the Creator ; not seeking God for what he is, but for what he gives. Wherefore St. Austin says (S. August. in Psal. lii.), "God will be served gratis, will be beloved without interest, that is, purely for himself; and not for any thing without himself ; and, therefore, he who invokes God to make him rich, does not invoke God, but that which he desires should come to him ; for what is invocation, but calling something to him ? Wherefore, when thou shalt say, ' My God, give me riches,' thou dost not desire that God, but riches, should come to thee ; for if thou hadst invoked God, he would have come to thee, and been thy riches ; but thou desiredst to have thy coffers full, and thy heart empty, and God fills not chests, but breasts."

SECTION II.

Besides the possession of God, it imports us much to form a conception of this kingdom of heaven, which is that of the just, where they shall reign with Christ eternally, whose riches must needs be immense, since they are to be kings of so great and ample a kingdom. The place, then, which the blessed are to inhabit, is called the kingdom of heaven, because it is a most large region, and much greater than can perhaps fall under the capacity of our understanding. And if the earth, compared with heaven, be but a point, and yet contain so many kingdoms, what shall that be, which is but one kingdom, and yet extended over the whole heavens ? How poor and narrow a heart must that Christian have, who confines his love to things present, sweating and toiling for a small part of the goods of this world, which itself is so little ! Why does he content himself with some poor spot of the earth, when he may be lord of the whole heavens ?

Although this kingdom of God be so great and spacious, yet it is not dispeopled, but as full of inhabitants of all nations and conditions, as if it were a city, or some particular house. There (as the apostle said) are many thousands of angels, an infinite number of the just, even as many as have died since Abel; and thither also shall repair all who are to die, to the end of the world, and after judgment shall there remain for ever, invested in their glorious bodies. There shall inhabit the angelical spirits, distinguished with great regularity into their nine orders, to whom shall correspond nine others of the saints, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, pastors and doctors, priests and Levites, monks and hermits, virgins and other holy women. This populous city shall not be inhabited with mean and base people, but with citizens so noble, rich, just and discreet, that all of them shall be most holy and wise kings. How happy shall it be to live with such persons! The queen of Saba, only to see Solomon, came from the end of the earth; and to see Titus Livius, nations and provinces far distant came to Rome. To behold a king issue out of his palace, all the people flock together. What shall it then be, not only to see, but to live and reign with so many angels, and converse with so many eminent and holy men? If only to see St. Anthony in the desert, men left their houses and countries; what joy shall it be to discourse and converse with so many saints in heaven? If there should now descend from thence one of the prophets or apostles, with what earnestness and admiration would every one strive to see and hear him? In the other world we shall hear and see them all. St. Romanus, at the sight of one angel, when he was a gentile, left the world and his life, to become a Christian. How admirable shall it then be, to see thousands of thousands, in all their beauty and greatness, and so many glorious bodies of saints in all their lustre! If one sun be sufficient to clear up the whole world here below, what joy shall it be to behold those innumerable suns, in that region of light!

From this multitude of inhabitants, the place of glory is not only called the kingdom of heaven, but the city of God. It is called a kingdom, for its immense greatness, and a city, for its great beauty and population. It is not like other kingdoms and provinces, which contain huge deserts, inaccessible mountains and thick woods; nor is it divided into many cities and villages, distant one from another: but this kingdom of God, although a most spacious region, is all one beautiful city. Who would not wonder, if all Spain or Italy were but one city, and that as beautiful as Rome in the time of Augustus Cæsar, who found it of brick and left it of marble? What a sight were that of Chaldæa, if it were all a Babylon; or that of Syria, if all a Jerusalem? What, then, shall be the celestial city of saints, whose greatness possesses the whole heavens; and is, as the holy Scripture describes

it (to exaggerate the riches of the saints), all of gold and precious stones? The gates of this city were, as St. John says, one entire pearl, and the foundations of the walls jasper, sapphire, calcedon, emerald, topaz, hyacinth, amethyst and other most precious stones; the streets of fine gold, so pure that it seemed crystal; joining, in one substance, the firmness of gold and the transparency of crystal, and the beauty both of one and the other.

If all Rome were of sapphire, how would it amaze the world! How marvellous then will the holy city be, which, though extended over so many millions of leagues, is all of gold, pearl and precious stones; or to say better, of a matter of far more value, and peopled with such a multitude of beautiful citizens, as are as far above any imaginable number, as the capacity of the city is above any imaginable measure! Some famous mathematicians say of the empyreal heaven, that it is so great, that if God should allow to every one of the blessed, a greater space than the whole earth, yet there would remain as much more to give to others; and that the capaciousness of this heaven is so great, that it contains more than ten thousand and fourteen millions of miles. What wonder will it be, to see a city so great of so precious matter! The divines confess the capaciousness of this heaven to be immense, but are more willing to admire it, than bold to measure it. (Joan. Galier, in suo Peregrino.) However, there wants not one who says, that if God should make each grain of sand upon the sea-shore as big as the whole earth, they would not fill the concave of the empyreal heaven; and yet this whole city possesses all that space, and is all composed of matter far more beautiful and precious than gold, pearl and diamonds. Certainly, our thoughts cannot conceive so great riches and wonders; for which we ought to undergo all the pains and necessities of this world. St. Francis of Assisium (Chron. Frat. Min. p. 1. c. 60.), being afflicted with a grievous pain of his eyes, insomuch as he could neither sleep nor take any rest; and at the same time, molested by the devil, who filled his cell with rats, which, with their noise, added much to his pain, with great patience gave thanks to the Lord, that he had so gently chastised him, saying, "My Lord Jesus Christ, I deserve greater punishment; but thou, like a good shepherd, suffer me not to stray from thee." Being in this meditation, he heard a voice, which said to him, "Francis, if all the earth were of gold, and all the rivers of balsam, and all the rocks of precious stones, wouldst thou not say that this were a great treasure? Know that a treasure, which exceeds gold, as far as gold does dirt, balsam, water, or precious stones, pebbles, remains as a reward for thy infirmity, if thou be content and bear it with patience. Rejoice, Francis; for this treasure is celestial glory, which is gained by tribulations." Certainly, we have reason to suffer here all pains and poverty whatsoever, since we are to

receive in glory so much the greater riches. Wherefore, we ought to lift up our souls, and, weaning our hearts from the frail felicity of these temporal goods of the earth, to say with David, "Glorious things are said of the city of God." So did Fulgentius, who, entering Rome, when it was yet in its lustre, and beholding the greatness, beauty and marvellous architecture of it, said with admiration, "O celestial Jerusalem, how beautiful must thou be, if terrestrial Rome be such!" A shadow of this was shown to St. Josaphat, whose history is written by St. John Damascen. (In vita Josaph. et Barl.) St. Josaphat being in profound prayer, prostrate upon the earth, was overtaken with a sweet sleep, in which he saw two men of grave demeanor, who carried him through many unknown countries, to a field full of flowers and plants of rare beauty, laden with fruit, never before seen. The leaves of the trees moved with a soft and gentle wind, yielded a pleasant sound, and breathed forth a most sweet odor; there were placed many seats of gold and precious stones, which shined with a new kind of brightness; and a little brook of crystal water refreshed the air, and pleased the sight with a most agreeable variety. From thence he was brought into a most beautiful city, whose walls were of transparent gold, the towers and battlements were of stones of inestimable value, the streets and squares shone with celestial beams of light, and there passed up and down bright armies of angels and seraphims, chanting such songs as were never heard by mortal ears. Amongst others, he heard a voice, which said, "This is the repose of the just, this the joy of those who have given a good account of their lives to God." But all this is no more than a dream and a shadow, in comparison of the truth, greatness and riches of that celestial court. In regard that all the blessed, together with Christ, are to reign in this most rich city and kingdom, how great shall the riches be? Who was ever so rich as to have at the entrance of his house a large, massy piece of gold, two or three yards long? What riches will those be of heaven? because all the kingdom of heaven is to be of pure gold, all the streets and all the houses of that holy city; and not only gold, but more than gold. The holy Scripture, to make us, on one part, understand the riches of this kingdom of God, and on the other part, to know that they are of a higher and more excellent nature than those of the earth, expresses them with the similitude of the riches of this world, as gold, pearl and precious stones; because by these names we understand things of great wealth and value; but, withal, sets them forth for such as are not to be found upon earth; so as, when it speaks of pearls, it says, they were so great that they served for the gates of a city; when it speaks of emeralds and topazes, it makes them suffice for the foundation of high walls and turrets; when of gold, it makes it transparent as glass or

crystal. All this is to signify that in heaven there are not only greater riches, but of a more sublime and high quality than ours upon earth. And with reason is that holy city called the kingdom of heaven, to let us know, that the same advantage that heaven has above earth, the same have celestial honors, riches and joys above those which are here below. If the whole earth is no more than a point in respect of the heavens, what can those short and corruptible riches be, in respect of the eternal?

SECTION III.

Of those incomparable riches, the blessed are not only to be lords, but kings, as appears in many places of holy Scripture. Neither is the celestial treasure, or this kingdom of heaven, less or poorer, by having so many lords and kings. It is not like the kingdoms on earth, which permit but one king at once, and if divided, become of less power and majesty; but is of such condition, that it is wholly possessed by all in general, and by each one in particular; like the sun, which warms all and every one, and not one less because it warms many. The effects of riches are much greater and more noble in heaven, than they can be upon earth. Wealth may serve us here, to maintain our power, honors and delights; but all the gold in the world cannot free us from weakness, infamy and pain. The power of a rich king can reach no further than to command his vassals; and those who disobey him, he may either chastise with imprisonment or death, and is therefore feared and respected by them. But all this power is invalid without the assistance of his subjects. For what will it avail a prince to command such a city to be defended, if the soldiers within have a mind to deliver it? And, therefore, a certain jester of Philip II., king of Spain, demanded of him, "If all should say 'No,' to what your majesty commands, what is to be done?" giving him to understand, that his power depends upon others. The power of a monarch depends not only upon the will of his subjects, but the walls of his fortresses, arms, instruments of war, and many other things; so that the people depend only upon one man, which is the prince; but the prince upon many men and matters; insomuch that many rich kings have been seen without power, as Cræsus, Andronicus and others, who were not able to defend themselves, with all their riches, from their own vassals. Witness Domitian, Commodus, Heliogabalus and Julius Cæsar. But the power of the blessed depends on no other power, nor man, which, as St. Anselm says (*Ansel. de Simil. c. 52.*), shall be so great that no force or resistance shall withstand it. If a saint have a mind to remove a mountain from one place to another, he shall do it with as much ease as we remove our eyes from one part to another. Neither is this a wonder. For even the faithful in this life, according to the promise of Christ, have

done it, as is written of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus and some others. And if angels, nay devils, have this power, the blessed shall not be denied it. Concerning honor, the richest princes can only make their vassals adore them upon the knee, and do them other outward reverence, but cannot hinder them from murmuring in their absence, or from observing their actions, and interpreting them as they please. They have many flatterers, who praise them with their tongues and scorn them in their hearts; and for the most part they are far fewer who praise, than despise them; for there are but few who discourse with them, but many who discourse of them; and, therefore, few who praise them in presence, and many who censure them in absence. Concerning pleasures, it is true that princes are not content with ordinary delights, and therefore provide themselves with magnificent shows, costly recreations, exquisite comedies, pleasant gardens, woods for hunting, and are all clothed splendidly. But none of those can make a calenture not to afflict them, or that the pains of the head, stomach or gout do not molest them, or that cares and fears do not break their sleep.

No gold or money can secure the goods of this world, or free them from imperfections. This only is to be had in heaven, where their power is so free from weakness, that one only angel, without army, guns, swords, or lance, could destroy at once a hundred and eighty thousand men. (4. Reg. 19.) With what speed and facility do saints succor their devotees, who invoke them, without impediment either from the distance of place, or hinderance from the violence of tyrants! How complete then shall be the honor of the blessed, since even the devils shall reverence them! Nay, even now, many who despised them living, seeing the many miracles which God has wrought by their intercession, have honored them after death. The pleasures also are pure and true, without mixture of pain or grief, as we shall see in the proper places. Besides, it is to be considered, that the great riches of the saints are not, like those of the kings of the earth, drawn from the tributes imposed upon their vassals, which, though just, yet are not free from this ill condition, that that which enriches the prince, impoverishes the subject. The riches in heaven have no such blemishes; they are burdensome to none; and what is given to the servants of Christ, who reigns in heaven, is not taken from any.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Greatness of eternal Pleasures.

HONOR, profit and pleasure are distinct goods upon earth, and are rarely found together. Honor is seldom a companion of profit,

and profit of pleasure ; and so the sick man drinks his medicine, because it is profitable, how bitter soever. Besides, the pleasures of the world are for the most part mixed with some shame, and oftentimes with infamy. They are costly and expensive ; we cannot entertain our pleasures, without diminishing our wealth. It is not so in eternal goods, in which to be honest is to be profitable, and to be profitable delectable. Eternal honors are accompanied with immense riches, and they are both attended by pleasures without end. All this is signified by the Lord, when he received the faithful servant into glory, when he says, " Well done, good servant and true ; because thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will place thee over many ; enter into the joy of thy Lord." In these words he first honors him, commending him for a good and faithful servant ; then enriches him, delivering many things into his hands ; and so admits him into the joy and pleasure of his Lord : signifying by this manner of expression, the greatness of this joy ; not saying, that this joy should enter into him, but that he should enter into joy, and into no other but that of his Lord. So great is the joy of that celestial paradise, that it wholly fills and embraces the blessed souls, which enter into heaven, as into an immense sea of pleasure and delight. The joys of the earth enter into the hearts of those who possess them, but fill them not, because the capacity of man's heart is greater than they can satisfy. But the joys of heaven receive the blessed into themselves, and fill and overflow them in all parts. Their glory is like an ocean of delights, into which the saints enter, as a sponge into the sea, which filling its whole capacity, the water surrounds and compasses it all about. Whereupon St. Anselm says (Ansel. c. 71. de Simil.), " Joy shall be within and without ; joy above and below ; joy round about on every side, and all parts full of joy." The same immensity of joy the Lord signified, when he said, by Isaias, " Behold, I create Jerusalem an exultation, and her people a joy." It is much to be noted, that he says not, I create a rejoicing for Jerusalem, or in Jerusalem, nor a joy in or for its people, but by a particular mystery, I make Jerusalem, that it shall be all an exultation, and its people all a joy. He speaks in this manner to set forth the greatness of his copious joy, with which that holy city and her inhabitants shall be, as it were, encompassed and overwhelmed. For as a plate of iron, in the middle of a furnace, is so wholly enkindled and penetrated by fire, that it seems fire itself, and contains the full heat of the furnace ; so a blessed soul in heaven is so replenished with that celestial joy, that it may not only be said to be joyful, but joy itself.

The multitude of joys in heaven is joined with their greatness ; and so great they are, that the very least of them is sufficient to make us forget the greatest contents of the earth ; and so many they are, as that, though a thousand times shorter, yet they would

exceed all temporal pleasures, though a thousand times longer; but joining the abundance of those eternal joys with their immense greatness, that eternal bliss becomes ineffable. Wherefore St. Bernard says, "The reward of saints is so great, that it cannot be measured, so numerous that it cannot be counted, so copious that it cannot be ended, and so precious that it cannot be valued." And Albertus Magnus (*In Comp. Theol.* l. 7. c. 7. 1 Cor. 2. Isai. 64.) to the same purpose: "So great are the joys of heaven, that all the arithmeticians of the earth cannot number them; the geometricians cannot measure them; nor the most learned men in the world explicate them: because neither eye hath seen nor ear hath heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for those who love him. The saints shall rejoice in what is above them, which is the vision of God; in what is below them, which is the beauty of heaven, and other corporal creatures; in what is within them, which is the glorification of their bodies; in what is without them, which is the company of angels and men. God shall feast all their spiritual senses with an unspeakable delight; for he shall be their object, and shall also be a mirror to the sight, music to the ear, sweetness to the taste, balsam to the smell, flowers to the touch. There shall be the clear light of summer, the pleasantness of the spring, the abundance of autumn, and the repose of winter."

SECTION II.

The principal joy of the blessed is in the possession of God, whom they behold clearly, as he is in himself. For as honorable, profitable and delectable (according to what we have already said) are not divided in heaven; so the blessed souls have three gifts, essential and inseparable from that happy state; which correspond to those three kinds of blessings, which the divines call vision, comprehension, and fruition. The first consists in the clear and distinct sight of God, which is given to the just as a reward of his merits, by which he receives an incomparable honor, since his works and virtues are rewarded in the presence of all the angels, with no less a crown and recompense, than is God himself. The second is, the possession which the soul has of God, as of his riches and inheritance. And the third is, the ineffable joy which accompanies this sight and possession. The greatness of this joy no tongue can tell; and I believe, that neither the blessed themselves, who have experience of it, nor the angels of heaven, are able to declare it. Yet it will not be amiss, if we (as much as our ignorance and rudeness are able to attain to) consider and admire it. This joy has two singular qualities, by which we may in some sort conceive the immensity of it. The first, that it is so vigorous and powerful, that it excludes all evil, pain and grief. This only

is so great a good, that many of the philosophers held it for the chief felicity of man. And therefore Cicero (*Cicero de Fin. et 5 Tuscul.*) writes, that Hieronymus Rhodius, a famous philosopher and a great master, to whom may be joined Diodorus the Peripatetic, speaking of the chief happiness of man, taught, that it consisted in being free from grief; it being the opinion of those philosophers, that not to suffer pain or evil, was the greatest and most Supreme good. But herein was their error, that they judged that to be the good itself, which was but an effect and consequence of it. For so powerful is that love and joy, which springs from the clear vision of God, that it is sufficient to convert hell into glory; insomuch, as if to the most tormented soul in hell, were added all the torments of the rest of the damned, both men and devils, and that God should vouchsafe him but one glimpse of his knowledge, that only clear vision, though in the lowest degree, were sufficient to free him from all those evils, both of sin and pain; so that his soul being rapt by that ineffable beauty which he beheld, would not be sensible of any grief at all. O how potent a joy is that, which cast into such an abyss of torments, converts them all into consolations! How mighty were that fire, whereof one spark would consume the whole ocean! There is no joy in this world so intense, which can suspend the grief we suffer from a finger that is in sawing off. Grievs do more easily bereave us of the sense of pleasures, than pleasures do of pains. Yet such is the greatness of that sovereign joy in heaven, that it alone is sufficient to drown all the griefs and torments, both in earth and hell; and there is no pain in the world able to diminish the least part of it.

The other stupendous wonder which proceeds from the greatness of this joy, is the multitude of those pleasures, which, as from a most fruitful root, spring from it. Who would not be astonished, that the happiness of the soul should cause so many and so marvellous effects in the bodies of the blessed? So excellent is that beatific vision, which with ineffable joy possesses the spirit, that it bursts forth into the body, with all the evident demonstrations of beauty, lustre, and the other gifts of glory. We see here, that the heart is not able so far to dissemble a great joy conceived, as that it appears not by some sign in the body; but that joy is so weak and feeble, that it extends no further than to express some little cheerfulness and mirth in the countenance. But the beatific vision is so immense a joy, that it wholly changes the body, making it beautiful as an angel, resplendent as the sun, immortal as a spirit, and impassible as God himself; working great miracles and prodigies in the body, by the redundancy of that unspeakable comfort, which the spirit feels. O! if one could place before the eyes of the world the body of some blessed saint endowed with the four gifts of glory, full of clearness, splendor and beauty,

casting forth a fragrancy, infinitely more sweet to the senses than that of musk and amber, that men might see by this shadow how immense is that light and joy which thus illustrates and beautifies the flesh. O mortals! why do ye covet other pleasures, with loss of soul and body, and do not rather seek after these, with the profit and glory of both? O how different are temporal delights from eternal! those (especially if they be unlawful) blemish and destroy the soul, and weaken and corrupt the body; but these beautify and embellish them both, conferring perfect happiness upon the soul, and beauty and immortality upon the body.

SECTION III.

Finally, all those joys of the blessed, both in soul and body, which are innumerable, have their source and original from that unspeakable joy of the clear vision of God. And how can the joy be less, which proceeds from such a cause, who gives himself, being the sweetness and beauty of the world, to be possessed by man, that joy being the very same which God enjoys, and which suffices to make God himself blessed, with a blessedness equal to himself? Wherefore, not without great mystery, in those words, by which our Saviour admits the faithful into heaven, it is said, "Enter into the joy of the Lord." He said not simply, into joy, but to determine the greatness of it, says, it was his own joy, that joy, by which he himself becomes happy; and truly, the immensity of this joy could not better be declared. We are therefore to consider, that there is nothing in this world, which has not, for its end, some manner of perfection, and that those things, which are capable of reason and knowledge, have in that perfection a particular joy and complacency, which joy is greater or less according as that end is more or less perfect. Since, therefore, the divine perfection is infinitely greater than that of all the creatures, the joy of God, which is in himself, (for he has no end nor perfection distinct from himself,) is infinitely greater than that of all things besides. This joy, out of his infinite goodness and liberality, he has been pleased to make the holy angels and blessed souls partakers of, communicating to the just (although no ways due to their nature) his own proper and special felicity. And therefore, the joys of saints, which are those of the beatific vision, wherein consists the joy and happiness of God, must needs be infinite and unutterable; and all contents of this world, in respect of them, are bitter as aloes, gall and wormwood.

Besides, by how much a delectable object is more nearly and straightly united to the faculty, by so much greater is the joy and delight which it produces. Therefore God, who is the most excellent and delightful object, being in the beatifical vision united to the soul, with the most intimate union that can be in a

pure creature, must necessarily cause a most inexplicable joy, incomparably greater than all the joys real or imaginable, which can be produced, either by the creatures now existent or possible. For as the divine perfection encloses within itself all the perfections of things created, possible and imaginable, so the joy which it causes in the souls of the blessed, must be infinitely greater than all other joys, which either have, or can be caused by the creature. If the Greeks warred ten years, and lost so much blood for the beauty of Helen; and if it seemed a small thing to Jacob, to serve fourteen years a slave for that of Rachel, what trouble can seem great to us to enjoy God, in comparison of whose beauty, all which the world affords is but deformity? Absalom and Adonis were most beautiful, and with their very sight drew love and admiration from their beholders. But if looking upon Absalom, another ten times more lovely should appear, we should quickly cease to gaze upon Absalom, and fix our eyes upon the other; and if a third should come, a hundred times more graceful than the second, we should serve the second in the same manner, and our eyes and delight would still follow him who was the most agreeable. God being then infinitely more beautiful than we can either see or think, and although he should create some other creature ten hundred thousand times more beautiful than these we know, yet that, and one another million of times exceeding it, would both fall infinitely short of God himself; especially, that beauty not being alone, but accompanied with perfections without limit, with an infinite wisdom, omnipotence, holiness, liberality, bounty, and all that can be imagined good, beautiful and perfect, which must necessarily force the hearts of those who see him, (although before his enemies,) to love and adore him: which is another proof of the joy which springs from the beatifical vision, in regard it works so powerfully upon the will of him that enjoys it, that it compels it, by an absolute necessity, to a most intense love, although it had before detested it; because the joy must equalize the love which it caused. If there were in the world a man as wise as an angel, we should all desire to see him, as the queen of Saba did Solomon; but if to this wisdom were joined the strength of Hercules or Sampson, the victories of Machabeus or Alexander, the affability and courtesy of David, the friendliness of Jonathan, the liberality of the emperor Titus, and to all this, the beauty and comeliness of Absalom, who would not love and desire to live and converse with this admirable person? Why then do we not love and desire the sight of God, in whom all those perfections, and graces infinitely above these, are united; which also we ourselves, if we serve him, are to enjoy, as if they were our own?

O how great and delightful a theatre shall it be to see God as he is, with all his infinite perfections, and the perfections of all

creatures, which are eminently contained in the Deity! How admirable were that spectacle, where were represented all that are, or have been, pleasant or admirable in the world! If one were placed where he might behold the seven wonders of the world, the sumptuous banquets made by Assuerus and other Persian kings, the rare shows and feasts exhibited by the Romans, the pleasant trees and savory fruits of paradise, the wealth of Cræsus, David, and the Assyrian and Roman monarchs, and all those jointly together, who would not be transported with joy and wonder at so admirable a sight? But more happy were he, upon whom all these were bestowed, together with the assurance of a thousand years of life, wherein to enjoy them. Yet all this were nothing in respect of the eternal sight of God, in whom those, and all the perfections that either are or have been, or possibly can be, contained. Whatever else is great or delightful in the world, together with all the pleasures and perfections that all the men in the world have obtained, or shall obtain to the world's end; all the wisdom of Solomon, all the sciences of Plato and Aristotle, all the strength of Aristomenes and Milo, all the beauty of Paris and Adonis, if they should give all these to one person, it would have no comparison, and would seem to be a loathsome thing, being compared only to the delight which will be enjoyed in seeing God for all eternity; because in him only will be seen a theatre of bliss and greatness, wherein are comprised, as in one, the greatness of all creatures. In him will be found all the richness of gold, the delightfulness of the meadows, the brightness of the sun, the sweet taste of honey, the pleasantness of music, the beauty of the heavens, the comfortable smell of amber, the contentfulness of all the senses, and all that can be either admired or enjoyed.

To this may be added, that this inestimable joy of the vision of God is to be multiplied into innumerable other joys; into as many as there are blessed spirits and souls, which shall enjoy the sight of God; in regard every one is to have a particular contentment of the bliss of every one. And because the blessed spirits and souls are innumerable, the joys likewise of every one shall be innumerable. This St. Anselm (Ansel. de Simil. cap. 71.), notes in these words: "With how great a joy shall the just be replenished, to accomplish whose blessedness, the joy of each other saint shall concur? for every saint shall love another equally as himself, so he shall receive equal joy from his happiness to that of his own. And if he shall rejoice in the happiness of those, whom he loves equally to himself, how much shall he rejoice in the happiness of God, whom he loves better than himself? Finally, the blessed soul shall be surrounded with a sea of joys, which shall fill all his powers and senses with pleasure and delight, no otherwise than if a sponge, that had as many senses of pleasures, as it has pores and eyes, were steeped

in a sea of milk and honey, sucking in that sweetness with a thousand mouths. God is to the blessed a sea of sweetness, an ocean of unspeakable joys. Let us therefore rejoice, who are Christians, to whom so great blessings are promised; let us rejoice that heaven was made for us, and let this hope banish all sadness from our hearts. Palladius (Pallad. Hist. cap. 52.), writes, that the abbot Apollo, if he saw one of his monks sad, would reprehend him, saying, "Brother, why do we afflict ourselves with vain sorrow? Let those grieve and be melancholy who have no hope of heaven, and not we, to whom Christ has promised the blessedness of his glory." Let this hope comfort us, this joy refresh us; and let us now begin to enjoy that here, which we are ever hereafter to possess; for hope, as Philo says, is an anticipation of joy. Upon this we ought to place all our thoughts, turning our eyes from all the goods and delights of the earth.

The prophet Elias, when he had tasted but one little drop of that celestial sweetness, presently locked up the windows of his senses, covering his eyes, ears and face with his mantle. And the abbot Sylvanus, when he had finished his prayers, shut his eyes, the things of the earth seeming to him unworthy to be looked upon, after the contemplation of the heavenly, in the hope whereof we are only to rejoice.

CHAPTER V.

How happy is the eternal Life of the Just.

By that which has been said, may sufficiently appear how happy and blessed is the life of the just; but so many are their joys, and so abundant that eternal happiness, that we are forced to insist further upon this subject. When the Hebrews would express a blessed person, they did not call him blessed, in the singular, but blessings, in the abstract, and plural; and so, in the first psalm, in place of *Beatus*, the Hebrews say, *Beatitudes*; and certainly, with much reason; since the blessed enjoy as many blessings as they have powers or senses: blessings in their understanding, will and memory; blessings in their sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Nay, their blessings exceed the number of their senses, and the very pores of their bodies; so as that life is truly a life entire, total and most perfect, wherein all that is man, lives in joy and happiness. The understanding shall live there with a clear and supreme wisdom, the will with an inflamed love, the memory with an eternal representation of the good which is past, the senses with a continual delectation

in their objects. Finally, all that is man shall live in a perpetual joy, comfort and blessedness.

And to begin with the life and joy of the understanding: the blessed, besides that supreme and clear knowledge of the Creator, whereof we have already spoken, shall know the divine mysteries and the profound sense of the holy Scriptures; they shall know the number of saints and angels, as if they were but one; they shall know the secrets of divine Providence, how many are damned, and for what: they shall understand the frame and making of the world, the whole artifice of nature, the motions of the stars and planets, the properties of plants, stones, birds and beasts, and shall not only know all things created, but many of those things which God might have created; all which they shall not only know jointly and in mass, but clearly and distinctly, without confusion. This shall be the life of the understanding, which shall feast itself with so high and certain truths. The knowledge of the greatest wise men and philosophers of the world, even in things natural, is full of ignorance, deceit and appearance, because they know not the substance of things, but through the shell and bark of accidents; so as the most rude and simple peasant arriving at the height of glory, shall be replenished with a knowledge, in respect of which, the wisdom of Solomon and Aristotle were but ignorance and barbarism. Ludovicus Blosius (*Blos. de Mon. Spirit. c. 14.*), reports, that a certain simple and silly maid appeared after death to St. Gertrude, and began to instruct her in many high and sublime matters. The saint, admiring such great and profound knowledge in so ignorant a person, asked her from whence she had it; to whom the virgin answered: "Since I came to see God, I know all things." Wherefore St. Gregory said well, "It is not to be believed, that the saints, who behold within themselves the light of God, are ignorant of any thing without them."

What a content were it to behold all the wise men of the world, and the principal inventors and masters of sciences and faculties, met together in one room: Adam, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, Isaiah, Zoroaster, Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Homer, Trismegistus, Solon, Lycurgus, Hippocrates, Euclides, Archimedes, Theophrastus, Dioscorides, and all the doctors of the church! How venerable were this junto! how admirable this assembly! and what journeys would men make to behold them! If, then, to see such imperfect scraps of knowledge divided amongst so many men, would cause so great admiration, what shall be the joy of the blessed, when each particular person shall see his own understanding furnished with that true and perfect wisdom, whereof all theirs is but a shadow? Who can express the joy they shall receive by the knowledge of so many truths? What contentment would it be to one, if at once they

should show to him whatever there is, and what is done in the whole earth; the fair buildings so sumptuous, all the fruit trees of so great diversity, all living creatures of so great variety, all the birds so curiously painted, the fishes so monstrous, the metals so rich, all people and nations farthest remote? Certainly, it would be a sight of wonderful satisfaction. But what will it be to see all this, whatever there is in the earth, together with all that there is in heaven, and above heaven? Some philosophers, in the discovery of a natural truth, or the invention of some rare curiosity, have been transported with a greater joy and content than their senses were capable of. For this, Aristotle spent so many sleepless nights; for this, Pythagoras travelled into so many strange nations; for this, Crates deprived himself of his wealth; and Archimedes, as Vitruvius writes, never removed his thoughts night or day from the inquisition of some mathematical demonstration. Such content he took in finding out some truth, that when he eat, his mind was busy in making lines and angles. If he bathed and anointed himself, as was the custom of those times, his two fingers served him in the room of a compass to make circles in the oil, which was upon his skin. He spent many days in finding out, by his mathematical rules, how much gold would serve to gild a crown of silver, that the goldsmith might not deceive him; and having found it, as he was bathing in a vessel of brass, not able to contain his joy, he leaped about, and cried out, "I have found it, I have found it." If then the finding out of so mean a truth could so transport this great artist, what joy shall the saints receive, when the Creator shall discover to them those high secrets, and above all, that sublime mystery of the trinity of persons in the unity of essence? This, with the rest of those divine knowledges, wherewith the most simple of the just shall be endued, shall satiate their souls with unspeakable joys. O ye wise of the world, and ignorant before God! why do ye weary yourselves in vain curiosities, busy to understand, and forgetful to love; intent to know, and slow to work? Dry and barren speculation is not the way to knowledge, but devout affection, ardent love, mortification of the senses, and holy works in the service of God. Labor, therefore, and deserve, and you shall receive more knowledge in one instant, than the wise of the world have obtained with all their watchings, labors and experiences. Aristotle, for the great love he bore to knowledge, held, that the chief felicity of man consisted in contemplation. If he found so great joy in natural speculations, what shall we find in divine, and the clear vision of God?

There shall the memory also live, representing to us the divine benefits, and rendering eternal thanks to the Author of all; the soul rejoicing in its own happiness, to have received so great mercies for so small merits, and remembering the dangers from

which it has been freed by divine favor, it shall sing the verse in the psalm, "The snare is broken, and we are delivered." The remembrance likewise (as St. Thomas teaches) of the acts of virtue and good works, by which heaven was gained, shall be a particular joy to the blessed ; both in respect they were a means of our happiness, as also of pleasing so gracious and good a Lord. This joy, which results from the memory of things past, is so great, that Epicurus, prescribing a way to be ever joyful and pleasant, advises us to preserve in memory, and to think often of contents past. But in heaven we will not only rejoice in the memory of those things, wherein we have pleased God in complying with his holy will, and in ordering and disposing our life in his service, but in the troubles also and dangers we have past. The memory of a good lost, without remedy, causes great regret and torment ; and, on the contrary, the memory of some great evil avoided, and danger escaped, is most sweet and delectable. The wise man said, the memory of death was bitter, as indeed it is to those who are to die ; but to the saints, who have already passed it, and are secure in heaven, nothing can be more pleasant ; who now, to their unspeakable joy, know themselves to be free from death, infirmity and danger.

There also shall live the will, in that true and vital life, rejoicing to see all its desires accomplished, with the abundance and sweet satiety of so many felicities ; being necessitated to love so admirable a beauty as the soul enjoys and possesses in God Almighty. Love makes all things sweet ; and as it is a torment to be separated from what one loves, so it is a great joy and felicity to remain with the beloved ; and, therefore, the blessed loving God more than themselves, how unspeakable a comfort must it be to enjoy God, and the society of those whom they so much affect ? The love of the mother makes her delight more in the sight of her own son, though foul and of worse conditions, than in that of her neighbor's. The love, then, of saints one towards another, being greater than that of mothers to their children, and every one of them being so perfect and worthy to be beloved, and every one enjoying the sight of the same God, how comfortable must be their conversation ? Seneca said, that the possession of what good soever was not pleasing without a partner. The possession then of the chief good, must be much more delightful with the society of such excellent companions. If a man were to remain alone for many years, in some beautiful palace, it would not please him so well as a desert with company ; but the city of God is full of most noble citizens, who are all sharers of the same blessedness. This conversation also being with wise, holy and discreet personages, shall much increase their joy. For if one of the greatest troubles of human life be to suffer the ill temper, follies and impertinencies of rude and ill-bred people,

and the greatest content to converse with sweet, pious and learned friends, what shall that divine conversation be in heaven, where there is none ill-conditioned, none impious, none forward, but all peace, piety, love and sweetness? Insomuch that St. Austin says (Aug. lib. de Spiritu et Anima), "Every one shall there rejoice as much in the felicity of another, as in his own ineffable joy, and shall possess as many joys, as he shall find companions. There are all things, which are either requisite or delightful, all riches, ease and comfort. Where God is, nothing is wanting. All there know God without error, behold him without end, praise him without weariness, love him without tediousness, and in this love repose full of God." Besides all this, the security, which the will shall have in the eternal possession of this felicity, is an unspeakable joy. The fear that the good things which we enjoy, are to end, or at least may end, mingles wormwood with our joys; and pleasures do not relish, where there is danger. But this celestial happiness being eternal, neither shall nor can end, diminish or be endangered, but with this security adds a new joy to those others of the saints.

SECTION II.

Besides the powers of the soul, the senses shall also live nourished with the food of most proportionable and delightful objects. The eyes shall ever be recreated with the sight of the most glorious and beautiful bodies of the saints. One sun suffices to cheer up the whole world. What joy, then, shall one of the blessed conceive, in beholding as many suns as there are saints, and in seeing himself one of them, when his hands, feet and the rest of his members, shall cast forth beams clearer than the sun at mid-day? How shall he be transported in beholding the body of the holy Virgin, our most blessed Lady, more beautiful and resplendent than the light of all the saints together? When St. Dionysius Areopagita beheld her in a mortal body, she seemed to him as if she had been in glory. With what joy, then, and gladness shall we look upon her in heaven, clad with immortality! Of Esther, the holy Scripture tells us, that she was incomparably beautiful, and of most rare features, ravishing the eyes of all, and exceedingly amiable. With how far greater excellency will the Queen of heaven appear, full of all graces and privileges of beauty, in the happy state of glory! But above all, with what content and admiration shall we behold the glorious body of Christ, our Redeemer, in comparison of whose splendor that of all the saints shall be as darkness, from whose wounds shall issue forth rays of a particular brightness! The tormented members also of the martyrs, and the mortified parts of the confessors, shall flourish with a singular beauty and splendor. Besides all this,

the glory and greatness of the empyreal heaven, and the lustre of that celestial city, shall infinitely delight the blessed citizens.

The ears shall be filled with most harmonious songs and music, as may be gathered from many places of the Apocalypse; and if the harp of David delighted Saul so much, that it assuaged the fury of his passions, cast forth the devils, and freed him of that melancholy, whereof the wicked spirit made use; and that the lyre of Orpheus wrought such wonders both with men and beasts; what shall the harmony of heaven do? The devout virgin, Donna Sancha Corillo (Roa. l. 1. c. 10. in ejus vita), being sick and ready to die with excessive pain, with the hearing of music from heaven was freed from her grief, and remained sound and healthy. St. Bonaventure writes of St. Francis, that whilst an angel touched his instrument, it seemed to him that he was already in glory. What delight then will it be, not only to hear the sound of one instrument, played upon by an angel, but also the voices of thousands of angels together, with the admirable melody of musical instruments! The singing of one little bird only ravished a holy monk, for the space of three hundred years, when, as he persuaded himself, they being past, that there were not more than three hours past. What sweetness will it be to hear so many heavenly musicians, those millions of angels, so many men, who will be sounding forth their allelujas, which holy Tobias mentioned, and those virgins singing a new song, which none but they could sing! Surius writes in the life of St. Nicholas Tolentine, that for six months before his death, he heard every night, a little before matins, most melodious music of angels, in which he had a taste of that sweetness, which God had prepared for him in his glory; and such joy and comfort he received by hearing it, that he was wholly transported, desiring nothing more, than to be freed from his body to enjoy it. The same desired St. Austin, when he said, that all the employments, all the entertainments of the courtiers in heaven, consisted in praises of the divine majesty, without end, without weariness or trouble. "Happy were I, and for ever happy, if after death I might deserve to hear the melody of those songs, which the citizens of that celestial habitation, and the squadrons of those blessed spirits, sing in praise of the eternal King. This is that sweet music which St. John heard in the Apocalypse, when the inhabitants of heaven sung, 'Let all the world bless thee, O Lord; to thee be given all honor and dominion, for a world of worlds. Amen.'"

The smell shall be feasted with the odor which issues from those beautiful bodies, more sweet than musk or amber, and from the whole heaven, more fragrant than jessamines or roses. St. Gregory the Great (Greg. l. 4. dialog. c. 16. et Hom. 38. in Evan.) writes, that Christ, our Redeemer, appearing to Tarsilla,

his sister, cast forth so delicious a smell and fragrancy, that, it well appeared, it could not proceed but from the Author of all sweetness. St. Gregory of Tours (*Turon. l. 7. Hist. Fran.*), writing of the holy abbot, St. Sylvius, says, that when he was dead, there was so great sadness in the monastery for the loss of him, that our Lord was pleased to command, that he should be restored to life again. The saint obeyed, though with great resentment of what he left, and whither he returned. He bewailed his banishment, with a fresh and lively memory of that celestial country, where he had seen himself a little before with so great advantage. The monks pressed him very hard to declare to them something of what he had seen. He told them: "I, my dear brethren, mounted up to the land of the living, where I had the sun, moon and stars for my footstool, with greater splendor and beauty, than if it had been paved with silver and gold: being placed in the seat deputed for me, I was replenished with an odor of so singular sweetness, that it alone has been sufficient to banish all appetites, or desires of the things of this life; inso-much, that I neither desired to eat nor drink any thing to maintain it." Baronius (*Baron. To. 9. an. 716.*) reports of one, who, raised from death, amongst other things recounted, that he had seen a most delightful place, where an infinite number of most beautiful persons recreated themselves, and that there issued from them a most fragrant and miraculous sweetness; and this, the angels told him, was the paradise of the Son of God. The like is reported also by St. Gregory (*Greg. l. 4. Dial.*) of a certain soldier. Neither is it much that glorious bodies should breathe out so sweet a smell, since even in this valley of misery the bodies of saints, without life or soul, have sent forth a most admirable fragrancy. St. Gregory the Great (*Greg. 4. Dial. c. 14.*) writes, that at the instant, when St. Servius died, all who were present were filled with a most incomparable sweetness. St. Jerome reports the like of St. Hilarion, that ten months after his death, his body cast forth a most fragrant perfume. If this be in corruptible flesh, what shall be in the immortal bodies of the saints?

The taste also in that blessed country shall not want the delight of its proper object. For, although the saints shall not there feed, which were to necessitate that happy state to something besides itself, yet the tongue and palate shall be satiated with most pleasant and savory relishes; so as, with great decency and cleanliness, they shall have the delight of meat without the trouble of eating, by reason of the great delicacy of this celestial taste. The glory of the saints is often signified in holy Scripture, under the names of a supper, banquet, manna. St. Austin says (*Aug. lib. de Spiritu et Anima*), it cannot be explicated, how great shall be the delight and sweetness of the taste, which shall eternally be found in heaven. And St. Laurentius Justinianus

(Laur. Justin. de Dis. Mon. c. 23.) affirms, that an admirable sweetness of all that can be delightful to the taste, shall satisfy the palate with a most agreeable satiety. If Esau sold his birthright for a dish of lentil pottage, well may we mortify our taste here upon earth, that we may enjoy that perfect and incomparable one in heaven.

The touch also shall there receive a most delightful entertainment. All they tread upon shall seem to the just to be flowers, and the whole disposition of their bodies shall be ordered with a most sweet and exquisite temperature. For, as the great penances of the saints were exercised in this sense, by the afflictions endured in their bodies; so, it is reasonable, that this sense should then receive a particular reward. And as the torments of the damned in hell are most expressed in that sense, so the bodies of the blessed in heaven are in that sense to receive a special joy and refreshment. And as the heat of that infernal fire without light, is to penetrate even to the entrails of those miserable persons, so the brightness of the celestial light is to penetrate the bodies of the blessed, and fill them with an incomparable delight and sweetness. All then, that we are to do, is to live in that true and perfect life: all is to be joy in that eternal happiness. Therefore, as St. Anselm (Ansel. de Simil. c. 59.) says, the eyes, nose, mouth, hands, even to the bowels, and marrow of the bones, and all the every part of the body in general and particular, shall be sensible of a most admirable pleasure and content.

The humanity of Christ, our Redeemer, is to be the principal and chief joy of all the senses; and, therefore, John Tambescensis, and Nicholas of Nise say (Joan. de Tamba. Trac. de Deliciis sensib. Parad. Et Nich. de Nise, de quat. Noviss. 3. Myst. 4. Consi.), that as the intellectual knowledge of the divinity of Christ is the joy and essential reward of the soul, so the sensitive knowledge of the humanity of Christ is the chief good and essential joy of the senses, and the utmost end and felicity whereto they can aspire. This, it seems, was meant by our Saviour in St. John, when speaking to the Father he said, "This is life eternal, (that is, essential blessedness, as Nicholas de Nise interprets it,) that they knew thee, the only true God, (in which is included the essential glory of the soul) and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ;" in which is noted the essential blessedness of the senses; insomuch, as only in the humanity of our Saviour the appetites of the senses shall be so perfectly satisfied, that they shall have no more to desire, but in it shall receive all joy, pleasure and fulness of delight: for the eyes shall be the sight of him who is above all beauty; for the ears, one only word of his shall sound more sweetly than all the harmonious music of the celestial spirits; for the smell, the fragrantcy that shall issue from his most holy body, shall exceed the perfume of spices; for the taste and touch to kiss his feet and sacred wounds, shall be beyond all sweetness.

It is much also to be noted, that the blessed souls shall be crowned with some particular joys, which the very angels are not capable of. For first, it is they only, who are to enjoy the crowns of doctors, virgins and martyrs, since no angel can have the glory to have shed his blood and died for Christ; neither to have overcome the flesh, and, by combats and wrestlings, subjected it to reason. Wherefore St. Bernard said, the chastity of men was more glorious than that of angels. Secondly, men shall have the glories of their bodies, and joy of their senses, which the angels cannot; for as they want the enemy of the spirit, which is the flesh, so they must want the glory of the victory. Neither shall they have this great joy of mankind, in being redeemed by Christ from sin, and as many damnations into hell, as they have committed mortal sins, and to see themselves now freed and secure from that horrid evil, and so many enemies of the soul, which they never had; which must needs produce a most unspeakable joy.

CHAPTER VI.

The Excellency and Perfection of the Bodies of the Saints in the Life eternal.

WE will not forbear also to consider what man shall be when he is eternal, when, being raised again at the great day, he shall enter, soul and body, into heaven. Let us run over, if you please, all those kinds of goods, which expect us in that Land of Promise. When God promised Abraham the country of Palestine, he commanded him to look upon it, and travel and compass it from side to side. "Lift up thine eyes (saith the Lord), and from the place where thou standest, look towards the north, and towards the south, and towards the east, and towards the west. All the land which thou seest I will give unto thee, and thy seed for ever." And immediately after, "Arise, and walk the land in length and breadth, for I will certainly give it thee." We may take these words as spoken to ourselves, since they seem to promise us the kingdom of heaven; for no man shall enter into that, which he does not desire; and no man can desire that as he ought to do, which he has not walked over in his consideration; for that which is not known, is hardly desired. And therefore we ought to contemplate the greatness of this land, the length of its eternity, and the breadth and largeness of its felicity, which is so far extended, that it fills not only the soul, but the body, with happiness and glory; that glory of the soul redounding to the body, and perfecting it with those four most excellent gifts, and replenishing it with all felicity, which can be imagined or de-

sired. If Moses, seeing an angel in a corporal figure, only upon the back, and but in passing, received so great a glory from the light and beauty which he beheld, that his heart not being able to contain it, it struck forth into his face with a divine brightness; what joy shall the blessed souls receive from the sight of God himself, when they shall behold him as he is, face to face, not in passing, or for a moment, but for all eternity! This joy, by reason of their strict union, their souls shall communicate to their happy bodies, which from thenceforth shall be filled with glory, and invested with a light seven times brighter than that of the sun, as is noted by Albertus Magnus. (Albert. Mag. in Comp. Theol. l. 7. c. 38.) For, although it be said in the gospel, that the just shall shine as the sun, yet Isaias, the prophet, says, that the sun in those days shall shine seven times more than it now does. This light, being the most beautiful and excellent of corporal qualities, shall clothe the just as with a garment of most exceeding lustre and glory. What emperor was ever clad in such a purple? What human majesty ever cast forth beams of such splendor? Herod (Joseph. l. 19. c. 8.), upon the day of his greatest magnificence, could only clothe himself in a robe of silver, admirably wrought, which did not shine of itself, but by reflection of the sunbeams, which then in his rising, cast his rays upon it; and yet this little glittering was sufficient to make the people salute him as a god. What admiration shall it then cause, to behold the glorious body of a saint, not clothed in gold or purple, not adorned with diamonds or rubies, but more resplendent than the sun itself! Put all the brightest diamonds together, all the fairest rubies, all the most beautiful carbuncles; let an imperial robe be embroidered with them all; all this will be no more than as coals, in respect of a glorious body, which shall be all transparent, bright and resplendent, far more than if it were set with diamonds. O the baseness of worldly riches! they all put together, could not make a garment so precious and beautiful. If here we account it for a bravery, to wear a diamond ring upon our fingers, and women glory in some jewel, dangling at their breast, what shall it be to have our hands, feet and breast themselves, more glorious and resplendent than all the jewels of the world! The garments which we wear here, how rich soever, are rather an affront and disgrace to us, than an ornament, since they argue an imperfection and a necessity of our bodies, which we are forced to supply with something of another nature. Besides, our clothes were given as a mark of Adam's fall in paradise, and we wear them as a penance enjoined for his sin. And what fool so impudent and sottish, as to bestow precious trimming upon a penitential garment? But such are not the ornaments of the saints in heaven; their lustre is their own, not borrowed from their garments, not extrinsical without them, but within their very entrails, each part

of them being more transparent than crystal, and brighter than the sun. It is recounted in the Apocalypse, as a great wonder, that a woman was seen clothed with the sun, and crowned with twelve stars. This indeed was far more glorious than any ornament upon earth, where we hold it for a great bravery to be adorned with twelve rich diamonds and a carbuncle; and what are those in comparison of the sun and so many stars? Yet this is short of the ornament of the saints, whose lustre is proper to themselves, intrinsically their own, not taken and borrowed from something without them, as was that of the woman's. The state and majesty, with which this gift of splendor shall adorn the saints, shall be incomparably greater than that of the mightiest kings. It were a great majesty in a prince, when he issues forth of his palace by night, to be attended by a thousand pages, each holding a lighted torch; but were those torches stars, it were nothing to the state and glory of a saint in heaven, who carries with him a light equal to that of the sun, seven times doubled. And what greater glory, than not to need the sun, which the whole world needs? Where the just is, shall be no night; for wheresoever he goes, he carries the day along with him. What greater authority can there be, than to shine far brighter than the sun, carrying with him far greater majesty, than all the men of the earth could be able to confer upon him, if they went accompanying him, carrying lighted torches in their hands? St. Paul, beholding the gift of clarity in the humanity of Christ, remained for some days without sense or motion; and St. John only beholding it in the face of our Saviour, fell down as if dead, his mortal eyes not being able to endure the lustre of so great a majesty. St. Peter, because he saw something of it in the transfiguration of Christ, was so transported with the glory of the place, that he had a desire to have continued there for ever. Neither was this much in Christ, since the people of Israel were not able to suffer the beams which issued from the face of Moses, though then in a frail and mortal body. Cæsarius (Cæsar. lib. 12. mir. cap. 54.) writes of a great doctor of the university of Paris, who being ready to give up the ghost, wondered how it could be possible, that Almighty God could make his body, composed of dust, to shine like the sun. But our Lord being pleased to comfort and strengthen him in the belief of the article of the resurrection, caused such a splendor to issue forth from the feet of the sick person, that his eyes not being able to suffer so great a splendor, he was forced to hide them under his bed-clothes. But much more is it, that in bodies already dead, this glory should appear. The body of St. Margaret, daughter of the king of Hungary, sent forth such beams of light, that they seemed to be like those of heaven. The splendor also of other dead bodies of the saints has been such, that mortal eyes were not able to behold them. If then this gar-

ment of light beautifies those dead bodies without souls, how shall it illustrate those beautiful and perfect bodies in heaven, which are alive, and animated with their glorious spirits for all eternity? St. John Damascen said, the light of this inferior world was the honor and ornament of all things. How shall then the immortal light of that eternal glory deck and adorn the saints! for it shall not only make them shine with that brightness we have already spoken of, but, with diversity of colors, shall embellish some particular parts more than others. In the crowns of virgins it shall be most white, in that of martyrs, red, in that of doctors, of some particular brightness. Neither shall those marks of glory be only in their heads and faces, but in the rest of their members. And therefore cardinal Bellarmine (Bellar. conc. de Beat. p. 2.) says, that the bodies of St. John Baptist and St. Paul shall shine with a most incredible beauty, having their necks, as it were, adorned with collars of gold. What sight more glorious than to behold so many saints, like so many suns, to shine with so incomparable lustre and beauty? What light then will that of heaven be, proceeding from so many lights, or, to speak more properly, from so many suns? By how much the number of torches is greater, by so much is also greater the light they produce all together. How great then shall the clarity of that holy city be, where many suns do inhabit! And if by the sight of every one in particular, their joy shall be more augmented, by the sight of a number without number, what measure can that joy have, which results from so beautiful a spectacle?

SECTION II.

As all the bodies of saints are to be wholly filled with light, so they are to enjoy the privileges of light; which amongst all material qualities, is ennobled with this prerogative, that it has no contrary, and is therefore impassible. And so the glorious bodies of the saints, having nothing that may oppose them, are also freed from sufferance. Besides, nothing is more swift than light; and therefore those bodies which have the greatest share of light, are also the most swift in motion; wherefore, there is no element so nimble and active as fire; no nature so swift as that of the sun and stars; and light itself is so quick, that in an instant it illuminates the whole sphere of its activity. In like manner, the glorious bodies of the saints, as they are to enjoy more light, so they are to move with more speed and agility than the stars themselves. The light is also so subtle and pure, that it stops not in its passage, although it meets with some bodies solid and massy. The whole sphere and body of the air hinders not the sun from enlightening us below; and crystal diamonds, glass and other heavy bodies, are penetrated by light. But far greater shall be the subtilty and purity of the blessed souls, to whose passage

nothing, how gross or opaque soever, shall be an obstacle. For this reason, the saints in holy Scripture are often called by the name of light; and particularly it is said, that the ways of the just are like a shining light at mid-day. For as the light, because impassible, makes its way through dirty and unclean places, without defiling its purity, passes with speed, and penetrates other bodies that stand in its way; so the saints, endowed with the light which they receive from this gift of clarity, cannot suffer from any thing, having an agility to move with speed from place to place, and a subtilty to penetrate whatsoever they please.

The goods resulting from these privileges and endowments of the glorious bodies, are more in number than all the evils of this mortal life. The only gift of impassibility frees us from all those miseries which our bodies now suffer: the cold of winter, the heat of summer, infirmities, griefs, tears, and the necessity of eating; which one necessity includes infinite others. Let us but consider what cares and troubles men undergo, only to sustain their lives. The laborer spends his days in ploughing, sowing and reaping; the shepherd suffers cold and heat in watching his flock: the servant in obeying another's will and command; the rich man in cares and fears, in preserving what he possesses. What dangers are past in all states, only to be sure to eat? from all which, the gift of impassibility exempts the just. The care of clothing troubles us also little less than that of feeding; and that of preserving our health much more. For as our necessities are doubly increased by sickness, so are our cares; from all which, he who is impassible is free; and not only from the griefs and pains of this life, but if he should enter into hell, it would not burn one hair of him.

The prerogative also of the gift of agility is most great; which easily appears by the troubles and inconveniences of a long journey, which (howsoever we are accommodated) is not performed without much weariness, and oftentimes with danger, both of health and life. A king, though he pass in a coach or litter, after the most easy and commodious way of travelling, must pass over rocks, hills and rivers, and spend much time; but with the gift of agility, a saint, in the twinkling of an eye, will place himself where he pleases, and pass millions of leagues with as much ease, and in as short a time, as a furlong. We admire the story of St. Anthony of Padua, who in one day passed from Italy into Portugal, to free his father, condemned wrongfully to death; and that of St. Ignatius, patriarch of the society of Jesus, who in a short time transported himself from Rome to Cologne, and from thence to Rome, without being missed, in less than two hours' space. If to the mortal bodies of his servants, God communicates such gifts, what shall he do to the glorified bodies of his saints? What an excellency of nature were it to be able, in one day, to visit all the great kingdoms of the earth, and see what passed amongst them;

in an hour to go to Rome, the chief city of the world ; from thence to pass to Constantinople, the head of the eastern empire ; in another hour to Grand Cairo, and consider there the immense multitude of inhabitants ; in another hour go to Goa, the court of the East Indies, and behold the riches thereof ; in another to Pekin, the seat of the kings of China, and contemplate the vast extent of that prodigious city ; in another to Meaco, the court of Japonia ; in another to Manilla, the head city of the Philippine islands ; in another to Ternate in the Moluccas : in another to Lima in Peru ; in another to Mexico in New Spain ; in another to Lisbon and Madrid ; in another to London and Paris, the principal cities of Christendom, marking at ease what passed in the courts of those great monarchs ? If this were a great privilege, what shall that be of those glorious bodies, who in a short space can traverse all the heavens, visit the earth, return to the sun and firmament, and there observe what is above the stars in the empyreal heaven ? St. Gregory (Greg. lib. 3. Dial. 36.) writes in his dialogues, that a soldier assaulting a holy personage, and having his naked sword lifted up, and ready to give the blow, the man cried out to his patron, St. John, for help, who instantly withheld the soldier's hand that he could not move it. How soon did St. John hear him in heaven, who invoked him upon earth ! with what speed did he descend to assist him, withholding and drying up the arm of the wicked soldier ! The bodies of the saints are to move hereafter with no less speed than their spirits do now ; the weight of their bodies shall no ways hinder them ; they shall therefore in the same manner walk, or stay upon water, air, or in the heavens, as upon earth. It was miraculous in St. Quirinus, martyr, St. Maurus, and St. Francis of Paula, that they walked upon waters, passed rapid rivers and seas without vessels ; but the glorious bodies shall not only be able to traverse the seas, mount into the air, but enter into flames secure, and without hurt. It is said of St. Francis of Assisium, that in the fervor of his prayers and contemplations, he was seen lifted up into the air ; and the great servant of God, Father Diego Martines, of the society of Jesus, was lifted up in prayer above the highest trees and towers, and hanging in the air, persisted in his devotions. If God vouchsafe so great favors to his servants in this valley of tears, what privileges will he deny to the citizens of heaven ?

To this so notable gift of agility shall be annexed that of penetration ; by which their glorious bodies shall have their way free and pervious through all places ; no impediment shall stop their motion, and for them shall be no prison or enclosure. They shall with greater ease pass through the middle of a rock, than an arrow through the air. It shall be the same thing for them to mount to the moon, where they shall meet no solid body to oppose them, as to pierce to the centre through rocks, metals, and the gross

body of the earth. We wonder to hear, that the Zahories see those things which are hid under the earth. Let us admire that which is certain, that the saints cannot only see, but enter into the profundity of the earth, and tell what minerals and other secrets are contained in its entrails. Metaphrastes writes, that a certain Goth, a soldier of the garrison of Edessa, fell passionately in love with a maid of the same city, and demanded her in marriage; but the mother and kindred gave no ear to the treaty, trusting little to a barbarian and a stranger, who carrying her into a country far distant (as his was), might there use her at his pleasure. The soldier, notwithstanding, persisted still in his suit, with many promises of good entertainment, and gained at last the consent of the maid and her friends; only the mother would not be satisfied, before they had all entered into the temple of the holy martyrs, SS. Samona, Curia, and Abiba, and that there the soldier had renewed his promises by solemn oath, and called the holy martyrs as witnesses; which done, the maid was delivered to him; whom he not long after carried into his own country, where he was formerly married, and had his wife yet living. There better to conceal his wickedness, he fell into a greater, and like a wild beast without pity, enclosed the poor woman alive in a sepulchre, and there left her. She, thus betrayed, had recourse to the saints, whom she with tears invoked as witnesses of the soldier's treachery and breach of faith. At the instant the holy martyrs appeared in a glorious equipage, and casting her into a gentle sleep, conveyed her (the sepulchre still remaining locked) without hurt into her own country, where they left her. The barbarian, ignorant of what had happened, and persuading himself she was long since dead, returned a second time to Edessa, where convicted of the crime, he satisfied it with his life. If the saints then have power to make the persons of others pass through distinct bodies, much more are they able to make their own penetrate them without impediment.

Finally, the servants of Christ shall be there replenished with all goods, both of soul and body, that there shall be nothing more for them to desire. And every one, even during this life, hoping for these eternal goods, may say with St. Austin, "What wouldst thou, my body? What is it thou desirest, my soul? There you shall find all that you desire. If you are pleased with beauty, there the just shine as the sun; and if with any pure delight, there not one, but a whole sea of pleasures, which God keeps in store for the blessed; shall quench your thirst." Let men, then, raise their desires to that place, where only they can be accomplished. Let them not gape after things of the earth, which cannot satisfy them, but let them look after those in heaven, which only are great, only eternal, and can only fill the capacity of man's heart.

CHAPTER VII

How we are to seek after Heaven, and prefer it before all the Goods of the Earth.

LET a Christian compare the miseries of this life, with the felicities of the other; the weakness of our nature in this mortal state, with the vigor and privileges of that immortal which expects us; and let him excite and stir up himself to gain a glory eternal, by troubles short and temporary. Cyrus (Justinus, lib. 1.), when he intended to invade the Medes, commanded his Persians upon a certain day to meet him, with each one a sharp hatchet. They obeyed; he willed them to cut down a great wood; which performed with much toil and diligence, he invited them for the next day to a sumptuous banquet; and in the height of their mirth demanded of them, whether they liked better the first day's labor or that day's feast. The answer was ready; all cried out, That day's entertainment. With this, he engaged them to make war upon the Medes, assuring them, that after a short trouble in subduing an effeminate nation, they should enjoy incomparable pleasure, and be masters of inestimable riches. This served him to make the Persians follow him, and conquer the kingdom of the Medes. If this motive were sufficient to make a barbarous people prefer a doubtful reward, before a certain and hazardous labor, why should not a certain reward, and infinitely greater than the labor, suffice us Christians? Let us compare that celestial supper of the other life, with the troubles of this; the greatness of the kingdom of heaven, with the littleness of our services; the joys above, with the goods below; and our labors will seem feasts, our services repose, and the felicity of the earth, misery and baseness. What is the honor of this life, which is in itself false, given by lying men, short and limited, in respect of that honor the just receive in heaven, which is true, given by God, eternal, extended through the heavens, and manifested to all that are in them, men and angels? What are the riches of the earth, which often fall, are ever full of dangers and cares, and never free their owners from necessity, in comparison of those which have no end, and give all security and abundance? What are their short pleasures, which prejudice the health, consume the substance, and make infamous those who seek them, in respect of those immense joys of glory, which with delight, join honor and profit? What is this life of misery to that full of blessings and happiness; and what those evil qualities of our bodies now, to those precious gifts of glory after our resurrection? We are now all rottenness, unwieldiness, corruption, uncleanness, infirmities, loathsomeness and worms. Then shall be light, incorruption, splendor, purity, beauty and

immortality. Let us compare these together: what difference there is between a body sickly, weak, pale and loathsome, or some eight days after death, full of worms, corruption and abominable stench, with the same body being now in glory, exceeding the sun far in brightness, the heavens in beauty, more odoriferous than the purest roses or lilies!

Neither do the evils, or goods temporal, bear any comparison with the eternal; since, as the apostle says, that which is momentary and light, does cause an eternal weight of glory. In the beginning of the civil wars with the senate of Rome (Val. l. 9. c. 4.), carried on against Caius and Fulvius Gracchus, the consul Opimius, by public edict, promised that whosoever should bring him the head of Caius Gracchus, should receive for reward its weight in gold. All esteemed this a recompense highly to be valued, that one should receive equal weight of that precious metal, to the weight of dead flesh. But God's promises far exceed this. For a labor or trouble as light as a feather, he gives eternal weight of glory. The apostle says not, that God Almighty doth give only a great weight for light merits, but also adds over and above, that it shall be eternal. It were a great happiness, if according to our penances or voluntary labors, we should receive only equal proportion of bliss, yet so as it were eternal; because, how little soever it were, it were to be purchased at a very cheap rate, though it were in substance but so much for so much, so that the difference were only such in the duration thereof; as if for the toil of one day's labor, were given a whole year of rest. But Almighty God giving much for a little, for that which is light, massy and heavy, for a thing momentary, an eternal reward, what greater increase or advantage can we possibly receive? Setimuleyus will be a great confusion to us, who hearing the foresaid proclamation of the Roman consul, stuck not at any toil or danger, until he had cut off the head of Gracchus, greedy of the equal weight thereof in gold. Let us have the like courage the soldier had to take away the temporal life of a man, to the end we may not bereave ourselves of an eternal life. And since the purchase of heaven is so cheap, let us procure to augment the gain, and let us not have less desire of goods eternal, than Setimuleyus had for temporals; who, desirous of a great reward, filled with melted lead all the hollow places of the head, which he had cut off. Let us fill our momentary and light works with great affection and love. Let us increase our desires, and in any work, how little soever, accompany the same with a great will, with a vehement desire to hoard up eternal treasures for temporal pains. What an advantageous exchange will it be, to buy heaven for a draught of water; for that which is but vile, and lasts but a moment, that which is of inestimable price, and is to last for all eternity! What sort of bargain would it be, if one could buy a kingdom for a

straw? Yet so it is: for that which is no more worth than a straw, we may purchase the kingdom of heaven. Certainly, all the felicity, riches and earthly delights are no more than a straw, compared with the glory of heaven. How fond and foolish would he be, who, having a basket full of chips, would not give one of them for a hundred weight of gold! This is the sottishness of men, that for earthly goods they will not receive those of heaven. Who is there, that having offered to him a precious stone for some small sand, should not have so much wit, as to give a thing so base and abject, for a thing so noble and precious? Who being offered a rich treasure for a handful of cinders, would not admit of so painful an exchange? What hunger-starved man, being invited to a full table of dainty dishes, upon condition he should not eat an apple-paring, would reject the invitation? Heaven is offered us for things little, and of small estimation. Why do not we accept the offer? Christ, our Saviour, called the kingdom of heaven, a precious jewel and a hidden treasure, for which we ought to forsake all the goods of the earth; by reason they are all but dust and misery, in respect of a treasure of pearls and diamonds. St. Josaphat did very much in leaving an earthly kingdom, for a greater assurance of that of heaven. He did very much, according to our deceitful apprehension and false estimation of things. But if it be well considered, he did very little, much less than if he had given one basket full of earth for another of gold, a sack full of ashes for a great treasure, and a nut-shell for a great banquet. Whatever is in the earth may well be given for the least crumb of heaven; because all the greatnesses of this world are but crumbs, nut-shells and trash, compared with the least particle of heavenly bliss. All the felicity upon earth has no substance nor weight, if compared with the weight of eternal glory, which is prepared for us. This David did, and convinced by the greatness of heavenly glory, said to our Lord, "I did incline my heart to do thy justifications." The heart of man is like a just balance, that inclines that way where is the greatest weight. And as in the heart of David the temporal weighed little, and the eternal much, so, inclined by the eternal weight of glory which attends us, and moved by the hope of so great a reward, the fulfilling of the law of God prevailed more with him, than his own appetite and inclination.

SECTION II.

If we shall consider the labors, for which eternal glory is promised us as a hire and reward, the apostle spoke with great reason, that all which we can suffer in the time of this life, is no ways worthy of that glory to come, which is to be manifested in us. To St. Austin all the torments of hell seemed not much, for the

gaining of celestial glory but for some short time. And if we consider the greatness of that joy, all the penances of St. Simon Stylites, the fasts of St. Romualdus, the poverty and nakedness of St. Francis, and the scorns and affronts put upon St. Ignatius, are no more than the taking up of a straw, for the gaining of an earthly empire. All stories are full, for how small matters upon earth, men have exposed themselves to great and almost certain dangers. Because David caused it to be published in his army, that he that should first set upon the Jebuseans, who were the hardiest of all his enemies, should be made general, Jacob hesitated not to expose his life to manifest danger, breaking through the pikes and lances, to obtain that honor at the price of his own blood. Because king Saul published in the army, that he would give his daughter in matrimony to him that should overcome the giant Goliath, there being none found that durst attempt it, David slighted all danger in hopes of obtaining such a recompense. What have not men attempted to gain a terrestrial reward? Nothing has seemed much to them. For the gaining then of heaven, all things ought to seem little to a Christian. Seneca wondered at what soldiers did and suffered for so short and transitory kingdoms as are those of the earth, and that not for themselves, but for another. Much more may we wonder, that the sufferings and labors of this life, by which we are to gain the kingdom of heaven, not for a stranger, but for ourselves, seem so great and grievous to us. What did not Joshaam perform, for the advancing of the kingdom of David, though he was esteemed a poor wretch and a dastard (2 Reg. 23. et 1 Paralip. 11. Vid. Sanctium et Tirinum. 2 Reg. 23)? Seeing that the kingdom of David lay at stake, he took such courage, that he set upon eight hundred men, and slew them in his fury; and on another occasion he killed three hundred. For the same kingdom of David, Eleazar, son of Ahobites, fought with such constancy and valor, that he slew innumerable Philistines, continuing the battle until he was so weary, that he was not able to move his arm longer, and it remained so stiff with weariness, as if it had been of stone. If for a kingdom of another man's dominions, these men were so valiant, why do not we take courage, and procure with great valor, to make conquest of the kingdom of heaven, though we lose all our strength, and even our lives in the conquest, since, in respect of it, all toil and labor is nothing? For the advancing then of the kingdom of David, his worthies performed such actions, that if they were not authorized by holy Scripture, might seem incredible. But what speak I of advancing his kingdom? when only to satisfy a desire of his, and perhaps an impertinent one, which was to drink of the water in the cisterns of Bethlehem, the young men threw themselves into the thickest of the enemy's squadrons, and with their naked swords cutting a passage through the midst of the army, fetched the de-

sired waters. If men undergo such hazards for the kingdom, nay for the pleasure of another, and that momentary, what ought not we to do for those eternal joys, which are to be our own, and for the kingdom of heaven, wherein we expect such immense honors, riches and pleasures? Why do we not at all take heart and courage? It is the kingdom of heaven we hope for; joys, riches, and honors eternal are those, which are promised us. All is but little, that can be suffered in time, to obtain the same. Semma, for the defence of a poor field, sown with lentils, durst fight alone against an army of the Philistines. For the defence then of grace, which is the seed of God, and to assure our glory, which is the fruit of the passion of Christ, it is not so much, if, without shedding of blood, we fight against our unruly appetites and conquer our corrupt nature in this life, that we may render it more perfect in the other. To this purpose the consideration of glory is most powerful, having still before our eyes heaven, which is promised us; and let not the eternal reward, proposed by Christ, be less efficacious, than the temporal proposed by man. This was signified by our Lord to the prophet Ezekiel, in those four living creatures, so very different in nature, but all one in their employment; to wit, an eagle, a lion, an ox and a man, which he beheld in the middle of the air, flying with each one four wings, as swift as a flash of lightning. What thing could so force the heavy nature of an ox, as to equal the flight of an eagle? or what could associate the fierce nature of a lion with the gentleness of a man? The same prophet declares it, saying that they carried heaven upon their heads, having the firmament above them; because, if heaven be in our thoughts, it will encourage us to all things; it will make material men equal to angels, and subject them to reason, who in their customs are brutish as wild beasts; so that he, who is slow and heavy as an ox, shall fly with four wings, and by conquering his own nature, become in his flight equal to the birds of the air; and he, who feeds grovelling upon the earth, shall elevate himself, and quit his short and transitory pleasures for those which are eternal.

SECTION III.

Neither is this much. For so great is the good which we expect, that for it to be deprived of all other goods whatsoever, ought to be esteemed a happiness, and to suffer all torments and afflictions, as a pleasure. Let us hear what St. Chrysostom says (Chrysost. Tom. 5. Hom. 19.): "How many labors soever thou shalt pass, how many torments soever thou shalt endure, all are nothing in respect of those goods to come." Let us hear also what St. Vincent, martyr, said to Dacianus, the president, and with what joy and patience in his torments he confirmed what he had spoken.

When they hoisted him up on high upon the rack, and the tyrant in a scoff demanded of him where he then was, the saint, smiling, and beholding heaven whither he was going, answered, "I am aloft, and from thence can despise thee, although insolent, and puffed up with the power thou hast upon earth." Being after menaced with more cruel torments, he said, "Methinks thou dost not threaten, but court me, Dacianus, with what I desire with all the powers and faculties of my soul." And when they tore his flesh with hooks and pincers, and burned him with lighted torches, he cried out with great joy, "In vain thou weariest thyself, Dacianus; thou canst not imagine torments so horrid which I could not suffer. Prison, pincers, burning plates of iron, and death itself, are, to Christians, sports and recreations, and not torments." He, who had the joys of heaven before his eyes, scorned and laughed at the bitterest torments upon earth. Let us consider them also, and we shall not shun the sufferance of any thing, whereby we may gain heaven. What pity is it, that a Christian, for some short and sordid pleasure, should lose joys so great and eternal; because he will not bear some slight injury here, should be deprived of celestial honor there; for not paying what he owes, and not restoring what he has unjustly taken, should forfeit the divine riches of heaven; and for one pleasant morsel, which the devil offers him, should deprive himself of the great supper, whereto God invites him? Who would choose rather to feed upon bones and scraps, which fell from the table, than to be a guest at the banquet, and feed upon the choicest and most savory dishes? That which the world offers in her best pleasures, is but shells, offals and parings; but that whereto God invites us, is a full table, wherein may be satisfied the most eager hunger of human appetite. With reason it is called in the holy Scripture, the great supper, and in some places the nuptial supper, by reason of that satiety, which nothing upon earth can give us. It is called also a supper, and not a dinner; because after dinner we used to rise, and go about other business and employments; but after supper there are no more labors—all is rest and repose. The principal dish, which is served in at this great supper, is the clear vision of God and all his divine perfections; after that, a thousand joys of the soul, in all its powers and faculties; then a thousand pleasures of the senses, with all the endowments of a glorified body. These latter are, as it were, the dessert of this divine banquet. And if the dessert be such, what shall be the substance of the feast? What comparison then between those great and eternal goods of heaven, and those which the world gives us? Certainly they are not worthy to be called so much as the shells of happiness.

It is much to be reflected on, that those who enjoyed not that great supper, which is a figure of glory, were not deprived of it by doing any thing, which was a sin in itself. For one excused

himself, because he had bought a farm ; another because he was to try his oxen ; a third because he was married ; none of which were sins ; but for the preferring those things to the kingdom of heaven, which being an incredible madness and blindness, made them not worthy to be admitted. And truly, all those, who are wholly taken up and employed in the things of the earth, do no other than prefer the scraps and parings of a poor and rustic dinner, before the royal feast of a powerful king. Moreover, although God had not invited us, most miserable and vile worms, to a supper of so infinite sweetness, but had only promised us the crumbs which fell from his table, yet ought we to have preferred them before the contents and commodities of this world. Let us fear, lest even in lawful pleasures there may be danger. For as the evils of sin are the cause of damnation, so the goods of the world may be the occasion of sin. Let us look only towards heaven ; let us open our eyes and consider, that those who are called by God to some special vocation, and did not embrace it, are introduced by holy Scripture as damned and forsaken by God, though their sin is not named, as it appears in these three who were invited ; but much more to our terror in that young man in the gospel, who having demanded of Christ, our Redeemer, what he should do to gain eternal life, and being answered, that he should keep the commandments of the law, which, he replied, he had done from his youth ; yet because the Lord called him, by a special vocation, to a greater perfection, which was to leave all and follow him, he went his way sorrowful, because he had much riches ; whereupon, our Saviour pronounced that memorable and terrible sentence, that it was easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven ; signifying thereby, that although he had kept the commandments, yet he was excluded heaven. For those, whom our Saviour favors with particular inspirations and callings, do not assure their salvation by a desire to keep the commandments, but by endeavoring to observe the evangelical counsels, quitting not only sins and the occasions of sinning, but the impediments of virtue and perfection, by which they might not only more assure heaven, but also obtain more glory ; and if they do it not, may justly fear, lest they may so much disoblige God Almighty, by despising his vocation, that he will not vouchsafe to grant them the efficacious helps for keeping his commandments. Little is all which can be done for the gaining of heaven, little what is suffered, little what is forsaken, little all the care to obtain it, little what caution not to lose it, little what impediments are to be avoided, little what austerities of life we undergo to assure it. And if we judge not so in this valley of tears, let the saints judge in heaven, who are of a different opinion from those upon earth. St. Teresa of Jesus (D. Mig. lib. 3. de Vit. Isabel.

c. 9.) appearing upon an occasion to that blessed woman, Isabella of St. Dominic, this most observant religious woman begged pardon of the saint, for a disgust that she persuaded herself she had given her, when, being prioress of Pastrana, she put up a very narrow grate, where the nuns were to hear mass. To some it seemed too straight, as also to St. Teresa, and she would have taken it away, but did not do it, because the prioress Isabella replied to her, saying, "It was not convenient, that, being so nigh to secular people, they might be seen by them." But the saint being now dead and glorious, Isabella of St. Dominic was much afflicted to consider, that by her replies, she had displeased her holy mother. The saint answered her, saying, "Some things here do appear to me far different." And, doubtless, in heaven things will appear far otherwise, where all care and solicitude in not offending God, will seem little, and every negligence and hinderance in his service will appear grievous.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of Evils eternal; and especially of the great Poverty, Dishonor and Ignominy of the Damned.

WE have not only reason to despise the goods of the world, from the consideration of heaven, but the evils also from that of hell, in comparison of which, all temporal evils are to be esteemed as happiness and blessings, and all the happiness and contents of earth to be abhorred as evils, at least if they any ways dispose to those eternal torments, and that perpetual privation of joys without end. And truly, such are the two extremes that attend us after life, that either of them were sufficient to make us despise all goods and evils temporal whatsoever. But joining the privation of the joys of heaven, with the condemnation to the torments of hell, it is admirable how any can delight in the things of this life, and not tremble at what may succeed. By reason of this danger, we ought to abhor and detest the pleasures and goods of this life, and to admit and embrace, if occasion be, the greatest evils of it, and to condemn both the one and the other, neither loving the goods, nor fearing the evils. Yet certainly, the goods of the world are so much more to be despised than the evils, as they usually are the greater occasions of sin, and so, consequently, of eternal damnation: The holy Scriptures, and writings of saints, are full of menaces against the rich, the prosperous, and the lovers of the world, who are those that for the most part people hell. The prophet Baruch (ch. 3.) says, "Where are the princes of the nations, who commanded over the beasts

of the earth, and sported with the birds of the air, who store up silver and gold, in which men put their trust; and there is no end of their seeking? Who stamp and work silver, who are solicitous, and their works are not found? They are exterminated, they have sunk down into hell, and others have risen in their places." St. James (ch. 5.) says, "Weep you who are rich, and lament the miseries which are to fall upon you." St. Paul (1 Tim. 6.) not only threatens those who are rich, but those who desire to be so, saying, "Those who desire to be rich, fall into the snare and temptation of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown them in death and perdition." With this counterpoise, then, and hazard, who would desire the wealth of the world, since only the desire of it is so poisonous? Let those who dote upon the world hear St. Bernard (Bernard. in Medit.), who says, "Tell me now, where are those lovers of the world, who a little while ago were here with us? there is nothing remaining of them but dust and worms. Mark diligently what they once were, and what they now are. They were men, as thou now art; they did eat, drink, laugh, and pass away their time in mirth and jollity, and in a moment of time sunk down into hell. Here are their bodies eaten by worms, and their souls condemned to eternal flames, until, united again, they both shall sink together into everlasting fire, that so those who were companions in sin, may be also in torments, and that one pain involve them who were consorts in the love of the same offence. What did their vain glory profit them, their short mirth, their worldly power, their fleshly pleasure, their false riches, their numerous families? Where is now their laughter, their jests, their boasting, their arrogance? How great shall be their sorrow, when such misery shall succeed so many pleasures; when, from the height of human glory, they shall fall into those grievous torments, and eternal ruin, where, according to what the wise man said, the mighty shall be mightily punished."

If, then, those who most enjoy the world run the greatest hazard of being damned, what can more induce us to the contempt of it, than the consideration of so lamentable an end? And what can more set forth the malice of temporal goods, than to be the occasion of eternal evils? If a curious built house be subject to some notable inconveniency, no man will dwell in it; if a courageous horse have some vicious quality, nobody will buy him; and if a crystal cup have a crack, it shall not be placed upon a royal cupboard; yet the pleasures and goods of the world, though subject to all those faults, how are they coveted, loved and sought after, and in them our perdition! Certainly, if we should consider seriously the eternal evils, which correspond to the short pleasures of this life, we should have all human felicity in horror, and, trembling to see ourselves in fortune's favor, should fly from the

world as from death. The reverend and zealous father, friar Jordan, being desirous to convert a certain cavalier to God and from the love of the world, for his last remedy had recourse to this consideration. Seeing him a beautiful young man, active and well disposed of body, he said to him, "At least, sir, since God has bestowed so comely a face and person upon you, think what pity it were they should be the food of eternal fire, and burn without end." The gentleman reflected upon his advice, and this consideration wrought so much with him, that, abhorring the world, and quitting all his possessions and hopes, he became poor in Christ, and entered into religion.

SECTION II.

Let us now come to the consideration of eternal evils, that from thence we may despise all that is temporal, be it good or bad. The evils of hell are truly evils, and so purely such, that they have no mixture of good. In that place of unhappiness, all is eternal sorrow and complaint, and there is no room for comfort. *Ælian* (*Ælian*, lib. 3. Var. Hist. c. 18.) relates a history, which, being taken as a parable, may serve to illustrate what we are about to speak of. He says, in the utmost borders of the *Mæropes*, there is a certain place called *Anastos*, which is as much as to say, from whence there is no return. There was to be seen a great precipice, and a deep opening of the earth, from whence issued two rivers, the one of joy and the other of sadness; upon the brinks of which grew various trees, of so different fruits, that those who eat of the one, forgot all that might cause grief, but those who eat of the other, were so possessed with an insupportable sadness, that all was weeping and lamentations, until they at last died with sighs and shedding of tears. What do those rivers signify, but the one of them, that whereof *David* speaks, which with its current rejoiced the city of God; the other, that flood of evil which enters the prison of hell, and fills it with greans, tears and despoite, without the least hope of comfort? for there shall the door be eternally shut to all good, or expectation of ease; insomuch, that one drop of water was denied the rich glutton, by so merciful and pitiful a man as *Abraham*. There shall not be the least good that may give ease, nor shall there want a concurrence of all evils which may add affliction. There is no good to be found there, where all goods are wanting; neither can there be want of any evil, where all evils whatsoever are to be found, and by the want of all good, and the collection of all evils, every evil is augmented. In the creation of the world, God gave a praise to every nature, saying, it was good, without further exaggeration; but when all were created and joined together, he said, they were very good, because the conjunction of many

goods advances the good of each particular ; and in the same manner, the conjunction of many evils makes all of them worse. What shall heaven then be, where there is a concourse of all goods, and no evils ? And what hell, where there are all evils, and no good ? Certainly, the one must be exceeding good, and the other exceeding evil. In signification of which, the Lord showed to the prophet Jeremias two little baskets of figs ; in the one of which were excessively good ones, and in the other excessively bad ; both in extremity. He does not content himself in saying, they were bad, or very bad, but says, they were over-bad ; because they represented the miserable state of the damned, where is to be the sink of all evil, without mixture of any good at all. And for this reason, it is not a sufficient expression to say they are evils ; but they are to be termed evils excessively great.

No man will admire this, who knows the grievousness of a mortal sin ; for committing of which, as he is a man, he deserves hell, and as he is a Christian (according to St. Austin) a new hell ; that is, an infidel merits one hell, and a Christian two, who, knowing Christ incarnate, and crucified for him, durst yet sin and offend him. Sin is an excessive evil, because it is an infinite evil ; and, therefore, it is not too much, if it be chastised with infinite evils. It is an evil which is greater than the whole collection of all other evils ; and for this reason it is not too much rigor, that the sinner should be chastised with the collection of all evils together. Those who wonder at the terribleness of eternal pains, know not the terribleness of sin. Whereupon St. Austin says (Aug. lib. 21. c. 12.), " Therefore, the eternal pains seem hard and unjust to human apprehension, because, in the weakness of our natural understanding, the sense of that eternal wisdom is wanting, by which might be perceived the great malice of the first prevarication." If, then, for that first sin, committed when Christ had not yet died for man, eternal damnation was not thought too much, what shall it be, when we know that our Redeemer was so gracious as to give his life, because we should not sin ? From the necessity of so costly and precious a medicine, may be collected the greatness of the infirmity. I say, the greatness and danger of a disease is known by the extraordinary remedies which are applied to it, and by the things which are sought out for the cure, and without which the malady would be without remedy. We may, therefore, gather the infinite malice of a mortal sin, because there was no other means sufficient, but one so extraordinary, as was God to become man, and give his own life for man, dying a death so shameful and painful as he did ; offering a price so great, as was the excessive worth and infinite price of his merits and passion. Sin is an injury against God ; and as the injury increases according to the greatness and

worth of the person offended, so God being infinite, the injury becomes of infinite malice; and as God is a good, which includes all goods, so a mortal sin, which is an injury done to him, is a mischief which exceeds all evils, and ought to be punished with all pains and torments.

SECTION III.

Let us now consider the several sorts of pains in hell, and the greatness of them. In the Roman laws, according to Tully and Albertus Magnus (Albert. Mag. lib. 7. Comp. Theol. c. 22.), we find mentioned eight several kinds of punishments; which were, the punishment of loss, when one is mulcted in his goods; the punishment of infamy, banishment, imprisonment, slavery, whipping, death, and the punishment of talion. To these may be reduced all the rest; and we shall find the Divine Justice to exercise them all upon those who have despised his mercy, and injured his infinite bounty and goodness. In the first place, there is the pain of loss, and that so rigorous, that in depriving the damned soul of one only thing, they take from him all good things; for they deprive him of God, in whom they are all comprised. This is the greatest pain that can be imagined. O how miserable and poor must the damned soul be, who has lost God for all eternity! He who is condemned by human laws, to the loss of his goods, may, if he live, gain others, at least in another kingdom, if he fly thither; but he who is deprived of God, where shall he find another God? and who can fly from hell? God is the greatest good, and it is, therefore, the greatest evil to be deprived of him; because (as St. John Damascen says) evil is the privation of good, and that is to be esteemed the greatest evil which is a privation of the greatest good, which is God, and must certainly, therefore, cause more grief and resentment in the damned, than all the torments and punishments of hell besides. And in regard there is in hell an eternal privation of God, who is the chief good, the pain of loss, whereby one is deprived for ever of the greatest of all goods, this privation will cause the greatest pain and torment. If the burning of a hand cause an insufferable pain, by reason that the excessive heat deprives the body of its natural temper and good constitution, which is but a poor and short good, how shall he be tormented, who is deprived and eternally separated from so great a good as is God? If a bone displaced, or out of joint, causes intolerable grief, because it is deprived of its due state and place, what shall it cause in a rational creature, to lie eternally separated from God, who is the chief end for which he was created? St. Chrysostom (Chrys. 24. in Matt. tom. 2. fol. 82. p. 2.) gives us some understanding of this grief, when he says, "He who burns in hell, loses all the kingdom of heaven, which is certainly a greater punishment than

that torment of flames. I know many who are afraid of hell ; but I dare confidently say, that the ambition of glory is far more bitter than all those pains which are to be suffered in hell. And no wonder, that this cannot be expressed in words, since we know not well the happiness of those divine rewards, by the want of which we ought also to measure the infelicity of their loss ; but we shall then, without doubt, learn, when we are taught by sad experience." Then our eyes shall be opened ; then the veil shall be taken away ; then shall the wicked perceive, to their greater grief and confusion, the difference between that eternal and chief good, and the frail and transitory pleasures of this life. If St. Chrysostom says this of the loss of the reward of eternal happiness, that it is a greater evil than the torment of hell-fire ; what shall the loss of God be, not only as our good, but also forasmuch, that in himself he is the chief good, of which the damned are to be deprived for all eternity !

Moreover, this condemnation of a sinner to the loss of God, and all that is good, shall extend so far, that he shall be deprived even of the hope of what is good, and shall be left for ever in that profound poverty and necessity, without expectation of remedy or relief. What greater want can any one have, than to want all things, and even the hope of any thing ? We are amazed at the poverty of holy Job, who from a prince and a rich man, came to lie upon a dunghill, having nothing left but a piece of a broken pot, to scrape away the putrefaction from his sores. But even this shall fail the damned, who would take it for a great refreshment to have a dunghill for their bed, instead of the burning coals of that eternal fire. Neither shall they be masters of so much as that broken pot, wherein to contain a little water, if it might be given them. For, as Isaias says, there shall not remain to them so much as the shred of a broken pot, to hold a little water from the pit, nor shall there be any found to give it them. That rich glutton in the gospel, accustomed to drink in cups of crystal, to eat in silver, and to be clothed in silks and curious linens, can tell us how far this infernal poverty extends, when he demanded not wines of Candy, but a little cold water, and that not in cups of gold or crystal, but upon the finger's end of a leper. This rich and nice glutton came to such an extremity, that he would esteem it a great felicity, that they would give him but one drop of water, although it were from the filthy and loathsome finger of a leper ; and yet this also was wanting to him. Let the rich of the world see to what poverty they are likely to come, if they trust in their riches ; let them know that they shall be condemned to the loss of all that is good. Let them reflect upon him, who was accustomed to be clothed in precious garments, to tread upon carpets, to sleep upon down, to dwell in spacious palaces, now naked, thrown upon burning coals, and packed

up in some narrow corner of that infernal dungeon. Let us, therefore, fear the riches of this world, and the poverty of the other.

SECTION IV.

The poverty or want of all good of the damned is accompanied with a most opprobrious infamy and dishonor, when, by public sentence, they shall be deprived, for their enormous offences, of eternal glory, and reprehended in the presence of saints and angels, by the Lord of heaven and earth. This infamy shall be so great, that St. Chrysostom (Chrys. in Math. 24.) speaks of it in these words: "A most intolerable thing is hell, and most horrible are the torments; yet if one should place a thousand hells before me, nothing could be so horrible to me, as to be excluded from the honor of glory, to be hated by Christ, and to hear from him these words, 'I know you not.' " This infamy we may in some sort declare, under the example of a mighty king, who, having no heir to succeed him in his kingdom, took up a beautiful boy at the church-door, and nourished him as his son, and in his testament commanded, that if, at ripe years, his dispositions were virtuous and suitable to his calling, he should be received as lawful king, and seated in his royal throne; but if he proved vicious, and unfit for government, they should punish him with infamy, and send him to the galleys. The kingdom obeyed his command, and provided him excellent masters and tutors; but he became so untoward and ill-inclined, that he would learn nothing, flung away his books, spent his time amongst other boys, in making houses of dirt, and other childish fooleries; for which his governors corrected and chastised him, and advised him of what was fitting and most imported him; but all did no good; only when they reprehended him, he would weep, not because he repented, but because they hindered his sport, and the next day did the same. The more he grew in age, the worse he became; and although they informed him of the king's testament, and what behoved him, all was to no purpose; until, at last, after all possible care and diligence, his tutors and the whole kingdom, weary of his ill disposition, in a public assembly declared him unworthy to reign, despoiled him of his royal ornaments, and condemned him with infamy to the galleys. What greater affront and ignominy can there be than this, to lose a kingdom, and to be made a galley-slave? for I know not which of these things that young man would be more sensible of. More ignominious, and a more lamentable tragedy, is that of a Christian condemned to hell, who was taken by God from the gates of death, adopted his son, upon condition, that if he kept his commandments, he should reign in heaven, and if not, he should be condemned to hell. Yet he, forgetting these obligations, without respect of his tutors and

masters, who were the holy angels, especially his angel-guardian, who failed not to instil into him holy inspirations, and other learned and spiritual men, who exhorted him both by their doctrine and example, what was fitting for a child of God; but he, neither moved by their advices, nor the chastisements of heaven, by which God overthrew his vain intentions, and thwarted his unlawful pleasures, only lamented his temporal losses, and not his offences; and at the time of his death, was sentenced to be deprived of the kingdom of heaven, and precipitated into hell. What infamy can be greater than this of the damned soul? For if it be a great infamy to suffer death by human justice, for some crimes committed, how great an infamy will it be to be condemned by Divine Justice, for a traitor and perfidious rebel to God? Besides this bitterness of pains, the damned persons shall also be eternally branded with the infamy of their offences; so as they shall be scorned and scoffed at by the devils themselves; and not only devils, but all rational creatures, men and angels, shall detest them, as infamous and wicked traitors to their King, God and Redeemer. And as fugitive slaves are marked and cauterized with burning irons, so this infamy, by some special mark of ugliness and deformity, shall be stamped upon their faces and bodies (Isai. 13. *Facies combustæ vultus eorum*), so as Albertus Magnus says, so ignominious shall be the body of a sinner, that when his soul returns to enter, it shall be amazed to behold it so horrible, and shall wish it were rather in the same state, as when it was half eaten up by worms.

CHAPTER IX.

The Punishment of the Damned, from the Horribleness of the Place, into which they are banished from Heaven, and made Prisoners in Hell.

ANOTHER kind of punishment, of great discomfort and affliction, is that of exile, which the damned shall suffer in the highest degree. For they shall be banished into the profound bowels of the earth, a place most remote from heaven, and the most calamitous of all others, where they shall neither see the sun by day, nor the stars by night, where all shall be horror and darkness; and therefore it was said of that condemned person, "Cast him forth into utter darkness;" forth of the city of God, forth of the heavens, forth of this world, where he may never more appear, into that land, which is called in the book of Job a dark land, covered with the obscurity of death, a land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting

horror inhabits; a land, according to Isaias, of sulphur and burning pitch, a land of pestilence and corruption, and a land of uncleanness and misery. St. Thomas (S. Thom. in 4. Sent.) says, that in the last purification of the world, there shall be a separation made in the elements, in such a manner, that the pure and refined parts shall remain above, for the glory of the blessed, and the impure dross and dregs shall be thrown into hell, for the punishment of the damned. Wherefore, as every creature is matter of joy to the blessed, so every creature shall add to the torments of the damned. This appertains to Divine Justice, that as separating themselves by sin from Him, who is one, they placed their ends in material things, which are many; so from many things they should receive their affliction. Into this sewer and sink of all the elements, into this land of punishment and torments, shall be banished the enemies of God.

The punishment of exile was most grievous to the Roman citizens, when, for some enormous fault, they were cast forth of the city, and banished into some desolate island or barbarous nation. Ovid, when he was sent into Pontus, did not cease from lamenting his misfortune, still sighing after his own country. And Cicero, when he returned from banishment, as if he had entered into a new world, whereof they had made him lord, cried out with admiration and joy, "O what beauty is this of Italy! what civility of people! what fields! what vines and crops of corn! what decency of the city! what humanity of the citizens! what dignity of the commonwealth!" If men were thus transported by the difference between some countries and others, and between some men and others, what difference shall the damned find between heaven and hell, and between the conversation of angels and of devils? What a grief shall it be to see themselves deprived of the palaces of heaven, the society of saints, and that happy country of the living, where all is peace, quietness, charity and joy; where all shines, all pleases, and all parts resound with allelujas? David being absent from his country amongst barbarous nations, although his life were preserved by his banishment, yet could not choose but resent it as his death. And the people of Judæa, whilst they remained in Babylon, thought it impossible for them to sing (being an action of mirth) whilst they were in a strange country. Certainly, if the damned had no other punishment, than to see themselves banished amongst devils, into a place far distant from heaven, sad as night, without the sight or comfort of sun or moon for all eternity, it were a torment insufferable.

It was a great tyranny in Alexander (Seneca, Justin, Valerius, Suidas), after he had cut off the nose, ears and lips of Calisthenes, to cast so worthy a person into a dungeon, only accompanied with a dog. A spectacle indeed lamentable, to see so discreet a

man used like a brute, and not have the company of one who might comfort him. But the damned would take it as a favor to have the company of dogs or lions, rather than that of their own parents. The tyrants of Japonia invented a strange torment for those who confessed Christ. They hung them with their heads downwards, half their bodies in a hole dug in the earth, which they filled with snakes, lizards and other poisonous vermin. But even those were better companions than those infernal dragons of the pit of hell, wherein not half, but the whole body of the miserable sinner shall be plunged. The Romans (*Isid. lib. 5. Etymol. c. 47.*), when they punished any as a parricide, to express the heinousness of the crime, shut him up in a sack, with a serpent, an ape and a cock. What a horror shall it be in hell, where a damned person shall be shut up with so many malicious spirits? Here, if a house be haunted with a goblin, none dare dwell in it; there they shall be forced to dwell with millions of devils. Here, none will live near a pest-house, or ill neighbors; think upon what neighborhood is in hell. Cato counselled those who were to take a farm, to have a special care what neighbors it had. And Themistocles (*Plutar. in Them.*), being to sell a certain manor, caused the crier to proclaim that it had good neighbors. How comes one, then, to purchase hell at so dear a rate as the price of his soul, having such cursed neighbors, where all scoff and deride him, all will abhor him, all will be irksome and troublesome, their disquietness and ranting will be insufferable, and the very sight and ugliness of them will frighten and astonish him? How grievous is the banishment into that place, where none wishes well to another; where the fathers hate their sons, and the sons abhor their fathers! This may appear by this example, which is rehearsed in the lives of the ancient fathers of the desert. A son of a usurer, being converted to penance by a sermon, wherein that vice was reprehended, begged of his father and of another brother of his, that, forsaking that infamous vice, they would restore all that they had unlawfully gained. They hearkened not to him, but, as they use to say, being deaf of that ear, he retired into the wilderness, and became a monk in company of other servants of Almighty God. His father and brother died without repentance of their sins. The holy monk was much afflicted for the miserable condition he feared they were in, and begged earnestly of Almighty God, he would please to reveal to him their state and condition. Being one day persisting in his prayer, an angel appeared to him, and, taking him by the hand, carried him to the top of a high mountain, from whence he discovered a deep valley full of fire, when, having first heard a fearful cry, he presently saw his father, who boiled in the fire, like pease in a boiling pot, and his brother swimming, as it were, in the flames, now above, and now below. The son spoke to his father, saying,

"Cursed be thou, father, for all eternity; because, by an unjust inheritance, thou hast been the cause of my damnation." And the father answered him; "Cursed be thou, son; for to the end I might leave thee a rich inheritance, I stuck not to gain it by unjust means." They disappeared; and the monk, much astonished, returned home to his monastery, where he lived in very rigorous penance till death. In other banishments, when parents or friends meet in a country far from home, they endeavor to comfort one another, and even enemies are then reconciled. But in this banishment of hell, friends abhor friends, and parents hate and are hated by their children.

SECTION II.

To this may be added, that in this banishment of the damned, the exiles are not allowed the liberty of other banished persons, who, within the isle or region of relegation, may go or move whither they please; but not so the damned in hell; because the place of their exile is also a prison, that so this grievous sort of punishment may be also added to their other torments. Hell is the prison of God, a most rigorous prison, horrid and stinking, wherein so many millions of men shall for ever lie fettered in chains; for chains, or something answerable to them, shall not there be wanting. Whereupon St. Austin says (*Aug. l. 1. de Civit. cap. 10. Less. de Perfec. Divin. l. 13. c. 30.*), and is followed by the schoolmen, that the malignant spirits shall be fastened to fire, or certain fiery bodies, from which the pain they received shall be incredible, being thereby deprived of their natural liberty, as it were fettered with manacles and bolts, so as they are not able to remove from that place of mishap and misery. It were a great torment to have burning irons cast upon our hands and feet; but this and much more shall be in hell, where those fiery bodies, which are to serve instead of shackles and fetters, are (as grave doctors affirm) to be of terrible forms, proportionable to their offences, and shall with their very sight affright them.

Besides, the bodies of the damned, after the final judgment past, shall be so straightened and crowded together in that infernal dungeon, that the holy Scripture compares them to grapes in the wine press, which press one another until they burst. Most inhuman was that torment inflicted upon three fathers of the Society of Jesus, by their enemies at Maestricht. They put certain rings of iron, stuck full of sharp points of needles, about their arms and feet, in such manner, as they could not move, without pricking and wounding themselves. Then they compassed them about with fire, to the end that, standing still, they might be burned alive; and if they stirred, the sharp points

pierced their flesh with more intolerable pains than the fire. What shall, then, be that torment of the damned, where they shall eternally burn, without dying, and without possibility of removing from the place designed them? where whatsoever they touch shall be fire and sulphur, into which their bodies shall at the latter day be plunged, as their souls at present swim in the middle of that lake or pond of fire (as the Scripture calls it), like fishes in the sea, which enters into their very substance, more than the water in the mouth, nose and ears of him who is drowned.

Neither shall unsavory smells, so proper to prisons, be wanting in that infernal dungeon. For first, that fire of sulphur being pent in without vent or respiration, shall send forth a most poisonous scent; and if a match of brimstone be so offensive here, what shall such a mass of that stuff be in hell? Secondly, the bodies of the damned shall cast forth a most horrible stench of themselves, and that more or less, according to the quality of their sins. It happened in Lyons, that a sexton entering into a certain vault, where the body of a man, not long dead, lay yet uncovered, there issued forth so pestilential a smell, that the dead man killed the living. If one man's body, then, caused such a stench, what shall proceed from a million of bodies, which, though alive for their further evil, yet are dead in the second death? Besides (as has been said), all the uncleanness and filth of the world, when it is purified, must fall into that eternal sink, which shall infinitely increase this noisome quality. Paulus Jovius writes, that the enemy of mankind, Actiolinus, the tyrant, had many prisons full of torments, misery and ill smells; inso-much, that men took it for a happiness rather to die, than to be imprisoned; because, being loaded with irons, afflicted with hunger, and poisoned with the pestilential smell of those who died in prison, and were not suffered to be removed, they came to end in a slow, but most cruel death. The Messenians also had a most horrible prison under earth, full of stench and horror, into which offenders were let down with a cord, never after to see the light. But what are these prisons to that of hell, in respect of which they may be esteemed as paradises full of jessamines and lilies? Victor Africanus (Victor. Afric. l. 2. de Persec. Vandal.), relating the torments which the Arian Vandals inflicted upon the holy martyrs, accounts the stench and noisomeness of the prison to be the most hideous and insufferable of all the rest. There were, says he, in one prison four thousand nine hundred and ninety-six martyrs, which was so straight and narrow, that they flung the holy confessors into it one upon another, who stood like swarms of locusts, or, to speak more piously, like precious grains of wheat. In this want of room, they had not place to comply with the necessities of nature,

but were forced to ease themselves where they stood, which caused so horrid a savor, as exceeded all the rest of their afflictions. One time (says the author), giving a good sum of money to the Moors, we had leave, whilst the Vandals slept, to see them, and at our entrance sunk up to the knees in that filth and loathsomeness. It seems, that the stink of hell could not be more lively expressed, than in the uncleanness and stench of this prison; but, without doubt, all this was but a rough draught, and a dead image of that which shall be there, in respect whereof this here was perfume and amber.

If one were cast into some deep dungeon, without clothes, exposed to the inclemency of the cold and moisture of the place, where he should not see the light of heaven, should have nothing to feed on but once a day some little piece of hard barley bread, and that he were to continue there six years without speaking or seeing any body, and not to sleep on any other bed but the cold ground, what a misery were this? One week of that habitation would appear longer than a hundred years. Yet compare this with what shall be in that banishment and prison of hell, and you shall find the miserable life of that man to be a happiness. There, in all his troubles, he should not meet with any to scoff and jest at his misfortunes, none to torment and whip him; but in hell he shall find both. The devils shall not cease to deride, whip and cruelly torment him. There should be no horrid sights, no fearful noises of howlings, groanings and lamentations; in hell the eyes and ears of the damned shall never be free from such affrights. There should be no flames of fire to scorch him; in hell they shall burn into his very bowels. There he might move and walk; in hell not stir a foot. There he might breathe the air without stench; in hell he shall suck in nothing but flames, stench and sulphur. There he might hope for coming forth; in hell there is no remedy, no redemption. There that little piece of hard bread would every day seem a dainty; but in hell, in millions of years, his eyes shall not behold a crumb of bread, nor a drop of water, but he shall eternally rage with a ravenous hunger, and a burning thirst. This is to be the calamity of that land of darkness, barren of all things, but of the brambles and thorns, of grief and torments.

CHAPTER X.

Of the Slavery, Chastisements and Pains Eternal.

ANOTHER grievous punishment amongst the Romans was that of servitude or slavery, especially of those who, for some great

and heinous offences, were condemned as slaves, not to the service of any particular person, but to undergo such and such punishments; and were, therefore, called *slaves of punishment*. This miserable slavery is that which the damned are to suffer in hell, who are condemned to be eternally slaves of pains and torments, and of their ministers and hangmen, the devils. Those slaves the Romans esteemed worse than the dead. (Cujac. Observ. l. 3. c. 10.) For, besides the loss of liberty (which is next to that of life), their condition was most infamous, and their life most miserable. Yet in respect of the slavery of the damned, who are subject to their pains, with all their senses and powers, both of soul and body, it might be accounted free and glorious. With their touch, they are to serve that burning and never-consuming fire; with their taste, hunger and thirst; with their smell, stench; with their sight, those horrid and monstrous shapes, which the devils shall assume; with their hearing, scorns and affronts; with their imagination, horror; with their will, loathsomeness and detestation; with their memory, despair; with their understanding, confusion; with such a multitude of other punishments, that they shall want eyes to weep for them. Ælianus (Ælianus, lib. 14. c. 22.) writes of Trizus, the tyrant, that he commanded his subjects not to speak together; and when they used signs instead of words, he also forbade those. Whereupon the afflicted people met in the market-place, at least to weep for their misfortunes. But neither was that permitted. Greater shall be the rigor in hell, where they shall neither be suffered to speak a word of comfort, nor move hand or foot, nor ease their hearts with weeping; neither, if all the pores of their bodies or hairs of their heads were turned into eyes, would they suffice to do it. Jeremy, the prophet, lamented with floods of tears, that Jerusalem, which was the queen of nations, should be made a slave and tributary. What tears are sufficient to lament the damnation of a Christian, who, from an heir and prince of the kingdom of heaven, has made himself a slave to the devil, and those eternal punishments of hell, to which he is to pay as many tributes as he has senses, powers and members? Let us mark, how great is the tyranny of the devil, even over those who are not his slaves. What rigor and punishments has he exercised upon those who are the servants of God! What will he do upon his own slaves and captives! We will only (passing over others) instance in one related by holy Scripture. Let us behold in what grievous manner (having demanded license from God) the devil afflicted holy Job, making him from head to foot but one sore, so loathsome and infected, that, lying upon a dunghill, he scraped away the corruption of his wounds with a potsherd; so lean, that only so much flesh remained about the lips of his mouth, as might enable him to speak and

answer. The night, which uses to be a refreshment and ease to the afflictions of others, increased his pains with visions and phantoms. In conclusion, his wife could not endure the noisomeness of his putrefied body; and his three friends, who came to visit and comfort him, were so amazed at his afflictions, that in seven days they could not speak to him. From whence we may draw two most important arguments: The first, that if God permitted the devil so to handle the simplicity, piety, obedience, purity and sanctity of Job, only to prove him, to convince the devil, and leave us an example of patience; how will he suffer the devil to deal with the duplicity, craft, boldness, impudence and uncleanness of others, who shall be condemned to hell-fire? The second, if the devils tormenting him, even until he became a leper, and the most loathsome spectacle that the world ever looked upon, the Scripture only says, that God touched him, attributing to God, what the devil did, as we attribute to the judge the torments executed by the hangmen; when God shall then discharge his whole wrath upon a slave in hell, what whips, what torments shall fall upon him!

Let us now come to the punishment of whipping, under which is understood all chastisement of pain, executed upon evil-doers. This was signified to the prophet Jeremý, when the Lord showed him a rod (for with rods they anciently whipped offenders), and immediately after, a pot all fiery, by which was signified hell; giving us to understand, that the whipping of divine justice shall be executed in the eternal fire of hell. But not rods or scourges, but strong hammers are reserved for sinners; and therefore the wise man said, "Smiting-hammers are prepared for the bodies of fools;" for so the Scripture, by antonomasia, called the damned; because they were such fools, that they knew not how to purchase heaven at so cheap a rate as God proposes it, and so fell into the eternal torments of hell for a momentary pleasure. St. Lidwina (Surius, 14 April. in Vit. S. Lidw. 3. p. c. 2.) heard in hell, amongst groans and complaints, the heavy blows of hammers, with which the damned were most cruelly tormented; signifying by those strokes the violence with which the divine justice falls upon sinners. For as the slaves of the earth are whipped and punished by their masters, so the slaves of hell are tormented by the devils, who have power and dominion over them. And even as slaves are whipped and chastised by their masters, so the torments, treating the damned as their slaves, lay upon them a thousand afflictions, griefs and miseries. But who shall be able to express the number and greatness of their torments, since all their powers and senses, soul and body, are to suffer in a most violent manner? And every member of their body shall suffer greater pain and torment, than if it were torn from the body. If one cannot tell how to suffer a tooth-ache,

head-ache, pain in the ear, or the pain of the cholic, what will it be where there shall not be any joint or the least part in the body, which shall not cause him a most intense pain ; not only the head or teeth, but also the breast, the sides, the shoulders, the back, the heart, the thighs, the knees, the feet, the nerves, the veins, and all the entrails, even to the very bones and marrow ?

SECTION II.

Besides this, every sense, from its particular object, shall receive a particular punishment. The eyes shall not only be grieved with a scorching heat, which shall burn their very pupils, but shall be tormented with monstrous figures. Many have lost their wits through fear of such apparitions, and some their lives. St. Bernard, explicating the 90th Psalm, reports, that a certain religious person, being ready to die, beheld two devils in that horrid and ugly shape, that he cried out, as if he had been distracted, "Cursed be the hour that I entered into religion ;" and then holding his peace, not long after, with a quiet and appeased voice and countenance, he said, "Nay, rather blessed be the time I became of this order ; and ever blessed be the Mother of Christ, whom I have always loved from my heart ;" and then turning to those who were in prayer, he said to them, "Marvel not at the perturbation of my spirit, for two devils appeared to me in that monstrous and horrid form, that if there were a fire of sulphur and melted metal, which were to last to the day of judgment, I would sooner pass through the midst of it, than turn again to behold them." If, then, two devils caused such amazement, what shall the sight of legions do, each exceeding the other in deformity ? If the devil be so ugly and terrible in this life, what shall he be in his proper place of damnation, and especially so many together ? Many are affrighted very much, passing through a church-yard, only for fear of seeing a phantom. In what a fright will be a miserable damned soul, which shall see so many, and of so horrid shapes ? St. Gregory, reflecting on that which is spoken in the book of Job, that in hell shall inhabit everlasting horror, says in this manner, "How can there be fear, where there is so much grief ? We grieve for a present evil, and fear for that which is to come ; and he who is arrived at the utmost of misery, has nothing more to fear ; and not to fear is a kind of good ; and no good can happen in hell." He answers, that as death, perpetually killing the damned, leaves them alive, that they may die living ; so pain torments them, and in such manner affrights them, that they are still in fear of greater succeeding pains. Their sight also shall be tormented with beholding the punishment of their friends and kindred. Hegesippus writes, that Alexander, the son of Hircanus, resolving to punish certain persons with exemplary

rigor, caused eight hundred to be crucified ; and whilst they were yet alive, caused their wives and children to be murdered before their eyes, that so they might die not one, but many deaths. This rigor shall not be wanting in hell, where fathers shall see their sons, and brothers their brothers tormented. The torment of the eyes shall be also very great, in regard, that those who have given others scandal, and made others fall into sin, shall see themselves, and those others, in that abyss of torments. To the sight of these dreadful and grievous apparitions, shall be added that nocturnal horror and fearful darkness of the place. Nicholas de Lyra (in Exod. 10.) says, that, therefore, the darkness of Egypt was said to be horrible, •because there the Egyptians beheld fearful figures and phantoms, which terrified them. In the like manner, in that infernal darkness, the eyes shall be tormented with the monstrous and enormous figure of the wicked spirits ; which shall appear much more dreadful, by reason of the obscurity and sadness of the eternal night.

The hearing shall not only be afflicted with an intolerable pain, caused by that ever-burning and penetrating fire, but also with the fearful and amazing noises of thunders, roarings, howlings, clamors, groans, curses and blasphemies. Sylla, being dictator, caused six thousand persons to be enclosed in the circus, and then appointing the senate to meet in a temple close by, where he intended to speak to them about his own affairs, to strike the greater terror into them, and make them know he was their master, he gave order, that so soon as he began his oration, the soldiers should kill this multitude of people, which was effected. Upon which were heard such lamentations, outcries, groans, clashing of armor, and blows of those merciless homicides, that the senators could not hear a word, but stood amazed with terror of so horrid a fact. Such shall be the harmony of hell, when the ears shall be deafened with the cries and complaints of the damned. What confusion and horror shall it breed to hear all lament, all complain, all curse and blaspheme, through the bitterness of the torments which they suffer ! St. Lidwina (Sur. in ejus vita, 14 Apr.) being in an ecstasy, saw a place so dreadful, made of black stone, and of such a depth, that it would fright one to look into it. The saint heard therein most fearful groans, cries and howlings, noise and horrible knocking, as it were of hammers, wherewith those within were tormented. She was so astonished to hear this, that if all the noise and lamentations of the world were joined together, it would be of no trouble in respect of it. The angel told her, that was the habitation of the damned, and demanded of her, whether she had any desire to see it. She said, No, she would not see it ; because only hearing what there was done, caused her an insufferable grief.

The smell, also, shall be tormented with a most pestilential

stench. Horrible was that torment used by Mezentius, to tie a living body to a dead, and there to leave them, until the infection and putrefied exhalations of the dead had killed the living. What can be more abominable, than for a living man to have his mouth laid close to that of a dead one, full of worms ; where the living must receive all those pestilential vapors, breathed forth from a corrupted carcass, and suffer such loathsomeness and abominable stench ? But what is this in respect of hell, when each body of the damned is more loathsome and unsavory than a million of dead dogs, and all these pressed and crowded together in so straight a compass ? Isaias, in respect of their stench, calls them dead bodies, when he says, "The stench of their carcasses shall ascend." And St. Bonaventure goes so far as to say, that if one only body of the damned were brought into this world, it were sufficient to infect the whole earth. Neither shall the devils send forth a better smell. For although they are spirits, yet those fiery bodies, to which they are fastened and confined, shall be of a most pestilential savor. And in this manner a devil, who had appeared to him, being put to flight by St. Martin, left such a horrible stench behind him, that the saint deemed himself to be already in hell, and said to himself, "If only one devil having been here has caused this, what will all the devils together, and damned men do ?" In the book of the doctrine of the fathers, it is written, that a pious damsel being carried by an angel to see hell, she saw her own mother there, put into a cauldron of boiling pitch up to the neck, and great numbers of vermin swarming in it, of a most intolerable stench.

What shall I then say of the tongue, which is the instrument of so many ways of sinning ; flattery, lying, murmuring, calumniating, gluttony and drunkenness ? Who can express that bitterness which the miserable shall suffer, greater than that of wormwood or aloes ? insomuch, that the Scripture says, "The gall of dragons shall be their wine, and they shall taste the poison of asps for all eternity." To which shall be joined an intolerable thirst, and dog-like hunger ; conformable to which David said, "They shall suffer hunger as dogs." Quintilian (Quintil. Declam. 12.) says, that famine is the most pressing of all necessities, and most deformed of all evils ; that plagues and wars are happinesses in respect of it. If, then, a famine of eight days be the worst of temporal evils, what shall that famine be which is eternal ? Let our epicures and gluttons hear what the Son of God prophesies : "Wo unto you who are full, for you shall be a hungered ;" and with such a hunger as shall be eternal. If the other evils of this world, as Quintilian affirms, may be esteemed not much, in comparison of hunger, even in this temporal life, what will they be in respect of the hunger of the life to come ? Hunger, in this life, brings men to such extremities, that not only

they come to desire to eat dogs, cats, rats, mice and snakes, and eat them in effect; but also mothers come to eat their own children, and men the flesh of their own arms, as it happened to Zeno, the emperor. If hunger be so horrible a mischief in this life, how will it afflict the damned in the other? Without all doubt, the damned would rather tear themselves in pieces, than suffer it. Neither shall thirst torment them less.

The sense of touching, as it is the most extended sense of all the rest, so shall it be the most tormented in that burning fire. We are amazed to think of the inhumanity of Phalaris, who roasted men alive in his brazen bull. This was a toy in respect of that fire of hell, which penetrates the very entrails of the body, without consuming them. The burning of a finger only does cause so great a torment, that it is insufferable; but far greater were it to burn the whole arm; and far greater were it, besides the arms, to burn the legs; and far more violent torment would it be to burn the whole body. This torment is so great, that it cannot be expressed in words, since it includes or comprises as many torments as the body of man has joints, sinews, arteries, &c.; and especially being caused by that so penetrating and true fire, of which St. Austin says, that this temporal fire is but a painted fire in respect of that in hell; insomuch, that the fire of hell does exceed ours by so many degrees, as a thing in life and reality exceeds the same in a picture. In conformity to what is here said, the venerable Peter Cluniacensis writes (and when we read such like stories, from the representations therein contained, we are to raise our thoughts to the substance therein represented); this venerable man then writes, that a wicked priest being ready to give up the ghost, there appeared to him two fiery devils, who brought with them a frying-pan, in which they told him they would fry him in hell; and a drop of hot liquor then falling out of the frying-pan on his hand, in a moment burned him to the very bones, in the sight of all that were present, who remained astonished to see the efficacy and violence of that infernal fire. Whereupon Nicholas of Nise says, that if there were a fire made of all the wood in the world, it would not be able to cause so much torment as the least spark of hell-fire. Cæsarius (Cæsar. l. 12. mirac. c. 23.) also writes, that Theodosius, bishop of Maestricht, had a servant, by name Eherbach, who, in a raging fit of anger, gave himself to the devil, upon condition he would help him to take revenge upon his enemies. Some years after, this man fell grievously sick of a disease that brought him to the point of death; and being now dead in all men's judgment, his soul was cast into a sea of fire, where he remained suffering, until such time as an angel of heaven came to him, and said, "Behold what they are to suffer that serve the devil! But if so great a mercy should be shown to thee, as to grant thee longer life, wouldst thou not spend it in doing penance for thy sins?"

He replied, "There can be nothing so hard or painful, which I would not undergo to escape this torment." Then the Lord used that mercy to him, as to let him return to the use of life and senses, and rising off the bier, where he was already placed to be carried to burial, all that were present, were astonished at him; who at the same instant began a course of life of most austere and rigorous penance. He went barefoot upon thorns and briers, store of blood issuing from the wounds received. He lived only on bread and water, and that in a very small quantity. What money he had he gave to the poor. There were many who, wondering at the rigor of his penance, endeavored to moderate the excess of his fervor and austerities; to whom he answered, "Wonder not hereat; for I have suffered torments of a far different kind; and if you had been there, you would frame a far different apprehension of them." And for to explicate the excessive torment that fire caused, he said, "If all the trees in the world were put in one heap and set on fire, I would rather burn there till the day of judgment, than suffer only for the space of one hour, that fire which I have experienced." Now, what a miserable unhappiness will it be to burn in those flames of hell, not only for one hour, but till the day of judgment, yea, even for all eternity, world without end! Who would not esteem it a hideous torment, if he were to be burned alive a hundred times, and his torments were to last every time for an hour's space? With what compassionate eyes would all the world look upon such a miserable wretch! Nevertheless, without all doubt, any of the damned in hell would receive this as a great happiness, to end his torments with those hundred times' burning. For what comparison is there between a hundred hours' burning, with some space of time between every hour, and to burn a hundred years of continual torment? And what comparison will there be between burning for a hundred years' space, and to be burning without interruption, as long as God is God? A Christian, who has ever committed a mortal sin, consider this, and let him see what can be difficult, sharp and intolerable, since thereby he deserved to be cast into hell; and let him see, whether he think any tribulation and affliction would be too great to give satisfaction. Well may he say, "I deserved to suffer greater torments, and therefore will not complain of this present suffering." Venerable Bede (Bed. de Gest. Anglorum, l. 5.) also writes of one, to whom the pains and torments, as also the joys and bliss of the other life were shown; and having obtained leave to return to this world again, he renounced all he had in this life, and betook himself to a monastery, where he persevered in a most rigid manner of life to his dying day; insomuch, that his manner of living gave perpetual testimony, that, although he was silent, yet he had seen horrible things, and that he had hopes to obtain other great ones, which did indeed deserve to be thirsted after.

He entered into a frozen river, which was near the convent, without putting off his clothes, having first broken the ice in several places, that he might get into the water, and afterwards let his clothes dry upon his back. Some admired, that a man's body was able to suffer so great cold in the winter time; and to those who demanded how he could possibly endure it, he replied, "I have seen colds far greater." And when they said to him, "How can you so constantly keep such a rigorous and austere manner of life?" he replied, "I have seen far greater austerity." Neither did he relent in the rigor of his penance, even in his decrepit age, but was very careful to chastise his flesh with continual fasts; and his exemplary conversation and wholesome admonitions were such, as did much good to many, and efficaciously stirred them up to the amendment of their lives.

We must make use of this self-same consideration, to encourage ourselves to suffer in this life all that can be suffered, in regard that in the other we should suffer more than can be suffered. Hell certainly is more insufferable than fasting with bread and water; far more than a rough hair-cloth, or a discipline, though never so bloody; far more than the greatest injuries and disgraces that can be put upon us. Let us then suffer that which is less, to be freed from that which is greater; especially being so much greater, by how much a living creature exceeds a painted one. Let us not complain of any thing that may happen to us in this life; but let us rather be comforted, that we, who have deserved to be in those eternal flames without profit, or hope of reward, may, by our patient suffering here some temporal afflictions, expect an everlasting reward for them in heaven. The mother of St. Catharine of Sienna (*Hist. S. Dom. 2. p. lib. 2.*) carried her to certain baths, to divert and recreate her, because she was very weak, and disfigured with leanness. But the saint could find in this entertainment a sharp cross, which was, that entering into the bath alone, she went to the bath-head, where the water came out in a manner boiling hot, and there suffered herself to be scalded to that degree, that it seemed impossible for a weak damsel to have been able to endure it. Her confessor asked her afterwards, how she had so much courage to abide such heat, and for so long a space. She replied, that when she placed herself there, she also placed her consideration in the pains of purgatory and hell-fire, and withal begged of God Almighty, whom she had offended, that he would be pleased to change the punishments she had deserved by her sins into temporal pains and sufferings; whereby all the pains of this life seemed very easy to her to suffer, and the great heat of the scalding water of the bath seemed a refreshment to her, in respect of the fiery furnace of hell, in which the damned are for ever and ever to be tormented.

And in regard holy Scripture calls hell a pool, or lake of fire, I will here rehearse a story out of St. Peter Damianus (*Pet.*

Damian. l. 2. ep. 15. ad Desid. c. 4.), which will give us to understand the terribleness of this torment. In Lombardy, says he, there was a man, cunning and crafty, of a notable talking tongue, and fond of breaking jests on all occasions; and commonly, by reason of his quick wit, he came off with credit; and if at any time it happened to him otherwise, he knew how to put it off very handsomely. In fine, he was one of those that knew very well how to live in the world. But what end had all his tricks and slights? He died; for against this stroke he had no defence. His body was buried in the church, and his soul in the place which God grant nobody may ever come in. A holy religious man being in prayer, he saw in spirit a great lake, not of water, but of fire, which boiled like a pot, and cast flames now and then up into the heavens, which sent forth sparks in so great quantity, and with such fearful noise, that it caused great horror to hear and see it. What would it be to suffer it? The miserable soul of this man we speak of, did suffer it in all extremity. Moreover, he saw, that the lake was encompassed round about with fearful serpents and terrible dragons, which had their mouths open towards the lake, with many rows of sharp teeth, to guard the lake. In this confusion of fire and cruel beasts, the soul of the miserable babbler was howling and crying, and swimming upon the flames, endeavoring to get to the bank; and drawing nigh, the comfort he found was, that a serpent, stretching out a long neck, and a wide mouth, was ready to tear him to pieces, and swallow him; he endeavored to turn another way in the lake, and drawing near the side, he lighted upon a dragon, the only sight whereof made him make more haste back again than he had done to come thither. He swam in the lake burning alive, and wherever he came, he found the like encounter; but which is worse, he shall remain there whilst God is God, without any remedy at all. And with much reason, says St. Peter Damianus, he suffered this punishment, of not being able to get out of the lake of fire, in regard, he in this life got so cunningly out of any adversity by his many shifts. In this manner, God Almighty gave to understand by this revelation, the extremity of this torment. But it is to be noted, that it is far greater than is here expressed; because this was not so much to tell us what hell is, as to declare by some similitude or representation, which may remain fixed in our senses, that which indeed exceeds all similitude or resemblance.

SECTION III.

The Pains of the Powers of a Damned Soul.

The imagination shall no less inflict those miserable offenders, increasing the pains of the senses by the liveliness of its apprehension. For if, in this life, the imagination is sometimes so vehe-

ment, that it hurts more than real evils, in the other the torment which it causes will be excessive. Alexander Tralianus (vide Marcel. Don. in Hist. Med. l. 2. c. 1.) writes of a woman, who was extremely ill, only with a false imagination that she had swallowed a snake, and was persuaded that she already felt most grievous pains, by the snake gnawing her entrails. What will the apprehension of the truth do, in those miserable wretches, when the worm of their conscience will be continually gnawing their very hearts? Assaharavius writes of others, who complained of the great pains they endured by whipping, when no man touched a thread of their garment. Much more is that which Fulgosius (Bapt. Fulgos. l. 9.) recounts as an eye-witness, that being judge in a duel, one of the competitors made the other fly, but instantly fell down dead himself, without any other cause, than an imagination that he was hurt to death; for he neither received wound nor blow, neither was the sign of any found upon his dead body. If in this life the imagination be so powerful in men who are in health, and have other diversions, as to cause a sense of pain, where no hurts grieve, where none molest, and death where none kills; what shall it be in hell, where there is nothing of delight to divert it, where so many devils punish and afflict with torments, preserving only life, that the pain of death may live eternally? And if we see some timorous people, with an imaginary fear, tremble and remain half dead, there is no doubt but the imagination of those miserable persons, joined with the horror of the place where they are, will cause a thousand pains and torments.

The powers of the soul shall be those which shall suffer the greatest lashes. The will shall be tormented with an eternal abhorring and rage against itself, against all creatures, and against God, the Creator of all; and shall, with an intolerable sadness, anger, grief and disorder of all the affections, violently desire things impossible, and despair of all that is good. And if joy consists in the possessing of what one loves, and pain in the want of that which is desired, and being necessitated to what is abhorred, what greater pain and torment, than to be ever desiring that which shall never be enjoyed, and ever abhorring that which we can never be quit of? Wherefore St. Bernard (Bern. l. 5. de Consid. ad Eugen. Papam.) says, "What thing more painful, than ever to wish that which shall never be, and never to wish that which shall not cease to be?" That which he desires, he shall never obtain; and what he desires not, eternally suffer. And from hence shall spring that raging fury, which David speaks of: "The sinner shall see and be raging; he shall gnash his teeth and be consumed."

This rage and madness shall be augmented by the despair which shall be joined to it. For as no man sins without injury

to the divine mercy, presuming to sin, in hope he may repent and be pardoned; so it was fit, that the divine justice should chastise the sinner with a despair of all remedy; that so he, who abused the divine benefits with a false hope, might feel the punishment of a true despair. This torment shall be most terrible to the damned. For as the greatest evil is eased by hope, so the least is made grievous by despair. Hope in afflictions is supported by two things: One is the fruit which may result from suffering; the other is the end and conclusion of the evil suffered. But in regard the despair of the damned is of so great evils, the despair itself will be a most terrible one. If one suffers and reaps fruit from it, it is a comfort to him, and the grief is recompensed by the joy of the benefit thereof; but when the suffering is without fruit or profit, then it comes to be heavy indeed. The hope of a good harvest makes the laborer with cheerfulness endure the toil of ploughing and sowing; but if he were certain to reap no profit, every pace he moved would be grievous and irksome to him. A day-laborer, with the hopes of his wages, goes through the toil of the day with great comfort; but if they commanded him to work for nothing, he would have no heart to work at all. The holy martyrs and confessors of Christ, what penances, what rigors, what martyrdoms have they not willingly undergone, expecting the fruit they were to draw from their patience? And, though in temporal afflictions, this hope of recompense should fail, yet the hope that they would some time cease and have an end, would afford some comfort and ease to the sufferers. But in hell both those are wanting; the damned shall neither receive reward for their sufferings, nor shall their torments ever have an end. Of them it is that St. John speaks: "They shall seek death, and shall not find it; they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them." O let a Christian consider how great a recompense attends the least of our sufferings here in Christ's service, and how vain and unprofitable shall all our sufferings be hereafter! One penitent knock upon the breast here, may gain eternal glory; there the most intense pains and torments, both in soul and body, cannot deserve a drop of cold water, nor so much ease as to turn from one side to the other. In this raging despair ends the temerarious hopes of sinners. Hell is full of those who hoped they should never enter into it; and full of those who despair of getting out of it. They offended with a presumptuous hope they should not die in sin; and that proving false, are fallen into eternal desperation. There is no hope can excuse the falling into so great a danger. Let us, therefore, secure heaven, and not sin.

The memory shall be another cruel tormentor of those miserable sinners, converting all they have done, good or bad, into

torments: the good, because they have lost their reward; the bad, because they have deserved their punishment. The delights also which they have enjoyed, and all the happiness of this life, in which they have triumphed (seeing that for them they fell into this misery), shall be a sharp sword, which shall pierce their hearts. They shall burst with grief, when they shall compare the shortness of their past pleasures with the eternity of their present torments. What mathematician so learned, as can perfectly set out the excess of those eternal years of the other life, to those short, few and evil days of this? What groans, what sighs will they pour out, when they see that those delights have hardly lasted an instant, and that the pains they suffer for them shall last for ages and eternities, all that is past appearing but as a dream? Let us tremble now at the felicity of this life, if it make such wounds in the hearts of those who have used it ill. Let us tremble at all our pleasures, since they may turn into arsenic and hemlock. The miserable wretch shall with great grief remember, how often he might have gained heaven, and did it not, but is now tumbled into hell, and shall say to himself, "How many times might I have prayed, and spent that time in play! but now I pay for it. How many times ought I to have fasted, and left it to satisfy my greedy appetite! How many times might I have given alms, and spent it in sin! How many times might I have pardoned my enemies, and chose rather to be revenged! How many times might I have frequented the sacraments, and forbore them, because I would not quit the occasion of sinning! There never wanted means of serving God; but I never made use of it, and am now, therefore, justly paid for all. Behold, accursed caitiff! that, entertaining thyself in pleasures, thou hast for toys and fooleries lost heaven. If thou wouldst, thou mightst have been a companion for angels; if thou wouldst, thou mightst have been in eternal joy; and thou hast lost all for the pleasure of a moment. O accursed and wretched fool! thy Redeemer courted thee with heaven, and thou despisedst him for a base trifle. This was thy fault, and now thou sufferest for it; and since thou wouldst not be happy with God, thou shalt now be eternally cursed by him and his angels."

The understanding shall torment itself with discourses of great bitterness, discoursing of nothing but what may grieve it. Aristotle shall not there take delight in his wisdom, nor Seneca comfort himself with his philosophy. Galen shall find no remedy in his physic, nor the profoundest scholar in his divinity. A certain doctor of Paris appeared after death to the bishop of that city, and gave him an account that he was damned. The bishop demanded of him, if he had there any knowledge. He answered, that he knew nothing, but only three things: The first, that he was eternally damned; the second, that the sentence

passed against him was irrevocable; the third, that for the vain pleasure of the world, he was deprived of the vision of God. And then he desired to know of the bishop, if there were any people in the world remaining. The bishop asking him the reason of that question, he answered, "Within these few last days, there have been so many souls descended into hell, that methinks there should not any be left upon earth."

In this power of the soul is engendered the worm of conscience, which is so often proposed to us in holy Scripture, as a most terrible torment, and greater than that of fire. ~~Only~~ in one sermon, or rather in the epilogue of that sermon (Marc. 9.), Christ our Redeemer three times menaces us with that worm, which gnaws the conscience, and tears in pieces the hearts of the damned; admonishing us as often, that their ~~worm shall~~ never die, nor their fire be quenched. For as the worm which breeds in dead flesh, or that which breeds in wood, eats and gnaws that substance of which they are engendered; so the worm, which is bred from sin, is in perpetual enmity with it, gnawing and devouring the heart of the sinner with raging, desperate, and now unprofitable grief; still putting him in mind, that by his own fault he lost that eternal glory, which he might so easily have obtained, and is now fallen into eternal torments, from whence there is no redemption. And certainly, this sentiment of the loss of heaven shall more torment him than the fire of hell. Of an evil conscience even in this life, St. Austin (Aug. in Psal. xlv.) said, that amongst all the tribulations of the soul, none was greater than that of a guilty conscience. Even the gentiles knew this, and therefore Quintilian (Quint. Declam. 12.) exclaims, "O sad remembrance and knowledge, more grievous than all torments!" And Seneca (Senec. ep. 97.) says, that all evil actions are whipped by the conscience of themselves; that perpetual vexation and resentment bring great afflictions and torments upon the actors; that wickedness drinks up the greater part of its own poison, and is a punishment to itself.

Certainly, it were a great rigor, if a father should be forced to be present at the execution of his son; but more, if he should be compelled to be the hangman; and yet greater, if the gallows should be placed before his door, so that he could neither go in or out, without beholding that affront and contumely; but far greater cruelty, if they should make the guilty person execute himself, and that by cutting his body in pieces, member after member, or tearing off his flesh with his own teeth. This is the cruelty and torment of an evil conscience, with which a sinner is racked and tortured amongst those eternal flames, not being able to banish his faults from his memory, nor their punishment from his thoughts. The envy, also, which they shall bear towards

those, who have gained heaven by as small matters as they have lost it, shall much add to their grief. Those who are hungry, if they see others, meaner than they, feed at some splendid and plentiful table, and cannot be admitted themselves, become more hungry; so shall it fare with the damned, who shall be more afflicted by beholding others, sometimes less than themselves, enjoy that eternal happiness, which they, through want of care, are deprived of. Esau, though a clown, having understood that his brother Jacob had obtained his father's benediction, cried out and roared like a lion, and consumed himself with resentment and horror. What lamentations shall those of the damned be, when they shall see that the just have gained the benediction of God, not by any deceit or cozenage used by them, but that they lost it through their own neglect? Those who, with opinion of merit, earnestly aim at some vacant dignity, if at length they see themselves neglected, and with shame put off, their grief and indignation swells above measure: in like manner, I say, shall it be with those damned wretches, who will be far more afflicted by the consideration of those great goods and eternal felicities, which they see themselves have lost, and those to enjoy them, whom they deemed far inferior to them in merit. Let us now, therefore, have remorse of conscience, whilst we may kill the worm, lest it then bite us, when it cannot die.

CHAPTER XI.

Of Eternal Death, and the Punishment of Talion in the Damned.

AFTER all this, there shall not want in hell the pains of death, which, amongst human punishments, is the greatest. That of hell is a living death, and as far exceeds this of earth, as the substance does a shadow. The death which men give, together with death, takes away the pain and sense of dying; but the eternal death of sinners is with sense, and by so much greater, as it has more of life, collecting within itself the worst of dying; which is to perish, and the most intolerable life, which is to suffer pain. And, therefore, St. Bernard calls the pain of the damned a living death, and a dead life; and Pope Innocent III., an immortal death. O death, how much less cruel art thou in taking away life, than in forcing to live in so painful a manner! St. Gregory (Greg. Moral. l. 9. c. 49.) also says, "In hell there shall be to the miserable, a death without death, and an end without end; for their death shall ever live, and their end shall ever begin." Mortal sin is the greatest of all evils, and consequently deserves the greatest of all punishments. Because in ordinary death,

which takes away the use of the senses, the rigor of it is not felt, God ordained another kind of death, in which the senses, perpetually dying, should perpetually feel the force of pain, and should ever live in the agony of dying. This David signified, when he said, that death should feed on the damned; for as the flock pastures upon the grass, but ends it not, because it still grows green and fresh again; so that death feeds upon sinners, but consumes them not.

This death of the damned, the holy Scripture calls the second death, because it succeeds the first, and comprehends both that of soul and body. And with much reason may it also be called a double death; because death is then doubled when we die, and feel the torment of dying; which in the first death of the body we do not. Even here amongst us, if there should be a condition, in which we might be sensible but of some part of that which death brings along with it, it would be esteemed a greater evil than death itself. Who doubts, but if one, after burial, should find himself alive and sensible, under the earth, where he could speak with no one, see nothing but darkness, hear nothing but those who walked above him, smell nothing but the rotten stench of their bodies, eat nothing but his own flesh, nor feel any thing but the earth that oppressed him, or the cold pavement of the vault where he lay; who doubts not, I say, but that this state were worse than to be wholly dead, since life only served to feel the pain of death? For this reason, the ingenious Romans, when they would punish sacrilege, which is the greatest crime, made use of interring the offenders alive, as of the greatest punishment; and therefore executed it upon their vestal virgins, when they offended against their chastity, as upon Oppia and Minutia, that, being alive, they might feel the pain and bitterness of dying. And certainly, Zeno, the emperor, found this punishment so bitter, that he devoured his own flesh by morsels. What sepulchre is more horrible than that of hell, which is eternally shut up on those who are in it, where the miserable damned remain not only under earth, but under fire, having sense for nothing, but to feel death, darkness, loathsomeness, pain and stench? This is therefore a double death, because to feel the pain of death is an evil double to that of dying. Wherefore St. Austin (*Lib. 6. de Civit. cap. 12.*) said, "No death is greater or worse, than where death dies not."

Besides, this death of hell may be called a double death, in respect it contains both the death of sin, and the death of pain; those unfortunate wretches standing condemned, never to be freed from the death of sin, and for ever to be tormented with the death of pain. There is no greater death than that of the soul, which is sin, in which the miserable are to continue whilst God is God, with that infinite evil, and that ugly deformity, which

sin draws along with it, which is worse than to suffer that eternal fire, which is but the punishment of it. After sin, what pain should there be greater than that of sin itself? And for this reason, in hell, in regard it is the torment for sin, it is a greater pain than death itself, or the most horrible death of all. Who trembles not with the memory only, that he is to die; remembering that he is to cease to be, that the feet whereon he walks, are no more to bear him, that his hands are no more to serve him, nor his eyes to see? Why then do we not rather tremble at the thought of hell, in respect of which the first death is no punishment, but a reward, a happiness, and a joy; there being no damned in hell, but would take that death, which we here inflict for offences, as an ease of his pains? O how much does the divine justice exceed the human! since that which men give to those whom they condemn for the greatest offences, would be received by those whom God condemns, as a great ease, comfort and accomplishment of their desires, who shall desire death, and death shall fly from them; for to all their evils and miseries, this, as the greatest, is adjoined, that neither they nor it shall ever die. This circumstance of being eternal does much augment the torments of hell, such being the condition of eternity (as has been already declared), that it infinitely augments that whereto it is annexed. Let us suppose, that one had but a gnat, that should sting his right hand, and a wasp at the left; and that one foot should be pricked with a thorn, and the other with a pin: if this only were to last for ever, it would be an intolerable torment. What will it then be, when hands, feet, arms, head, breast and entrails are to burn for all eternity? The only holding one finger in a candle, for the space of a quarter of an hour, nobody would be able to suffer. To be, then, plunged into the eternal flames, for years eternal, what understanding is there that is able, I do not say, to express in words, but to frame a due conception of this torment? That a torment is never to cease, and that the tormented is to live for ever, the only thinking of it causes great horror; what would it be to suffer it? A certain man, who had not much repentance or feeling, it seems, of his sins, having expressed various most heinous offences to the holy virgin St. Lidwina, the saint replied, that she would do penance for them, contenting herself, that he should only lie in his bed one night in the same posture, looking up towards heaven, without moving or turning himself all night. The man very contented and joyful, "If my penance (says he) be no greater than this, I shall soon have performed it." But he was scarce laid down in his bed, when he had a mind to turn on one side, it being a great trouble to him not to do it, persuading himself, that he never lay so uneasy in his whole life before; and said to himself, "My bed is a very good one, and soft; I am well in health, what is wanting to me? nothing else is

ing else is

wanting, but only to turn me from one side to the other. But this, what is it? be quiet and sleep as thou art till morning. Canst thou not? then tell me what doth ail thee?" By this means he called to mind eternity, discoursing thus with himself: "How comes this to pass, that thou canst not rest one single night, it being such a torture to be still, without turning thyself? What would it be, if thou wert to remain in one posture three or four nights? Certainly, it would be a death to me. Truly, I should never have believed one could suffer so much in a thing so easy. Wo is me! How little patience have I, since a thing so small and trivial grieves me so much! What would it have been, if she had commanded me to lie watching many weeks? What would it be, if I had the cholic, or were tormented with the gout or sciatica? Far greater evils than these are prepared for thee in hell, whither thou hastenest, by running into so many sins. Consider what a couch is prepared for thee in that abyss of misery, what feather beds, what Holland sheets. Thou shalt be cast upon burning coals; flames and sulphur shall be thy coverlets. Mark well, whether this bed be for one night only. Yea, nights, days, months and years, ages and eternities, thou art to remain on that side thou fallest on, without having the least relief, to turn thyself to the other. That fire shall never die, neither shalt thou ever die, to the end its torments may last eternally. After a hundred years, and after a hundred thousand millions of years, they shall be as lively and as vigorous as the first day. See what thou dost, by not fearing eternal death, by making no account of eternity, by setting so much of thy affection on a temporal life. Thou dost not walk the right way; change thy life, and begin to serve thy Creator." So did this man; being convinced by this discourse, he amended his life. And let him do the like, who comes to read this. Let him know, that if they should tell him that he were not to stir out of a bed of roses, for twenty years' space, he would not be able to suffer it: how will he be able to lie upon a bed of hot burning coals, in flames of sulphur, for all eternity?

SECTION II.

To all those pains shall be joined that of talion, which is, to pay with proportion so much for so much, which also shall not be wanting in hell. And therefore it is said in the Apocalypse, "By how much she glorified herself, and lived in delights, give her so much of torment." There shall the voluptuous person be afflicted, he who contemned others be despised, and the proud trampled under foot; it being most convenient for the divine justice, that the damned in hell should be punished in the same manner wherein they have here offended; as may appear by this example, related by Henry Gran (Hen. Gran. d. 9. c. 200.): A

young damsel, as to outward appearance given to prayer, fastings, watchings and penance, and for this reason esteemed by all for a saint, fell dangerously sick, and having made her confession, died. Within a short time after, she appeared to her confessor in a black and fearful shape. The priest, not knowing her, demanded who she was. "I am (said she) that one who was held by all for a saint. I am none, but a most miserable wretch, since I am condemned to hell-fire, where I shall never cease to be tormented, in company of the most abject and contemptible fiends, and that for the content and satisfaction I took in myself, and for the pride I had, esteeming myself far above others, having a base and vile conceit of all. For this vice I shall live in eternal torments. Though God should dry up the sea, and fill up the empty places thereof, with the smallest sand that can be imagined, and should permit that a little bird should but take one grain every hundred years, God's wrath and justice would not be satisfied with the torments my soul shall suffer, until such time as that bird should take out every grain of the aforesaid sand. For were this granted, I would most willingly suffer, all the time required for the performance thereof, all the pains and torments of all the damned souls in hell, with this only proviso, that at last my soul might come to obtain salvation. But there is no remedy now, and, therefore, father, do not put yourself to the trouble to pray for me, since nothing can avail me."

In this history, we see pride chastised by humiliation. In this that follows, we shall see pleasures and delightful entertainments chastised with proportionable torments. Cantipratensis (Cantip. l. 2. c. 49. p. 2. Joan. Maj. v. Infer. cx. 6.) writes, that in the parts of Teutonia, there was a soldier, very valiant, and much giving to tilting, and running at the ring. And accordingly as he lived, so he died miserably. His wife, who was a devout person, and of exemplary life, after the death of her husband, had, in an ecstasy, manifested to her the miserable state of her husband's soul. It was represented to her, as if it were still united to the body, encompassed with a multitude of devils; whereof the principal in her hearing gave command, they should furnish their new guest with a pair of shoes fit for his feet, which, piercing them, might reach to his very head. Then he commanded they should put on him a coat of mail, made full of sharp points, which might pierce his whole body in all parts. After this, a third command was, that they should put on him a helmet, with a sharp nail, that might pierce his head, and come to be clenched below his feet. Finally, by his command, they hung a target about his neck, so heavy, that it might crush all the bones in his body. All this being punctually and speedily performed, the prince of darkness told his officers: "This worthy person, after he had entertained himself in tilting, and the like exploits of

valor, was accustomed to refresh his toiled limbs with sweet baths, and then to retire to some soft bed, sporting himself afterwards with other dalliances of sensuality. Give him now somewhat of those refreshments which are usual here." They presently hurled him into a fire prepared; then, to ease him, they placed him in a bed red-hot, where a toad waited for him, of an immense size, with eyes most dreadful, which clasped the soldier very close, embracing him in such a rueful manner, that it was the most dreadful of all the torments he had suffered, and brought him even to the pangs of death. That good woman, who, by God's appointment, had seen what passed in her husband, had this vision so fresh in her memory all the days of her life, and with such continual oppressions of heart, that none who had known her before, beholding her afterwards, could otherwise imagine, but that she suffered some great and extraordinary affliction.

Many other pains and torments, proportionable to the crimes committed, may be seen in the works of Wermero. (Wermer. Mon. Carthus. in fasciculo morum.) A gentleman of noble parentage, an Englishman by birth, by divine inspiration became a Cistercian monk. He entered upon this course of life, and continued with such courage, that he stuck not to challenge the devil, and bid him defiance. The enemy made his cell the field of battle. Here he assaulted him first with whips; then, upon a certain occasion, gave him such blows, that the blood burst out at his mouth and nose. At the noise, the monks came in, and finding him half dead, they carried him to his bed, where he lay for the space of three days, without giving any signs of life; in which time, in the company of an angel, he descended into a very obscure place, where he saw a man seated in a chair of fire, and certain women, very beautiful, thrusting into his mouth burning torches, drawing them out at other parts of his body, which had been the instruments of his sins. The monk being astonished at this spectacle, the angel told him, "This miserable wretch was a very powerful man in the world, and much given to sensual pleasures, and for this reason, the devils, in the shape of women, torment him as thou seest." Passing a little farther, he beheld another, whom the infernal spirits were flaying alive, and having rubbed all his body over with salt, they put him to roast upon a gridiron. "This man (said the angel) was a great lord, so cruel to his vassals, as the devils are now to him." A little farther, they met with other persons of various states and conditions, who were tormented with several kinds of torments; many religious, both men and women, whose lives had been contrary to their profession; talkers, censurers of other men's lives, slaves to their bellies, defiled with lust, and other such like vices. To these the ministers of vengeance, in shape of most ugly fellows, gave many blows, in such sort, that they dashed

out their brains, and made their eyes fly out of their heads, because in their works they were blind, and without judgment; a chastisement which the wise man appoints for such like persons. Afterwards he lifted up his eyes, and beheld one fastened to a horrible wheel, turning in such a dreadful manner, that the monk here was almost beside himself. "That thou seest is terrible (said the angel); but far more terrible will be what thou shalt now see." At the instant, the wheel began to run from aloft, down to the most profound depths, with such horrid jerks, and with such noise, as if all the world, earth, heaven and all, were breaking in pieces. At this so sudden and direful accident, all the prisoners and gaolers of hell brake out into great cries, cursing and damning him, that came in the wheel. "This man (said the angel) is Judas the apostle, who betrayed his master; and as long as he shall reign in glory, which shall be world without end, so long shall this miserable wretch lie thus tormented." With these representations, God has given us to understand, the proportion his justice observes in his chastisements, to make us form some lively apprehensions of the greatness of those pains; they being indeed far greater than whatever we can conceive, by all the rigor imaginable exhibited in the senses. And in regard, what enters by the senses prevails more with us, for this reason, he represents to us the torments of the soul, suitably to those so horrible to our senses, as is to dash out the brains, and make the eyes fly out of the head. For though it is true, that this effect is not wrought indeed, yet the torments inflicted upon the damned souls are without comparison greater, than it would be for a man in this life, to be so beaten about the head, till his brains and eyes flew out. Let us, therefore, fear the divine justice; and let us understand; that in those parts of the body we offend God Almighty with greater delight, we shall be sure to be punished with greater torment.

And here may be given this further instruction, that as these and many such like stories, related for more variety of discourse in this treatise, oblige us not to a full and absolute belief of them; so they desire the favor of so much credit at least, as is allowed to Livy, Justin, or other historians; especially the recorders of these being such, as are no less grave and wise, and acknowledge, moreover, a greater obligation of conscience, not to wrong the world with lies, or empty relations, taken up upon the account of frivolous reports, especially in matters of such concernment. And as we think it not amiss to make use, as occasion serves, of profane examples and authorities, in confirmation of what we usually either speak or write, so, without all doubt, the same use of sacred and ecclesiastical occurrences may be no less available in such matters as these.

CHAPTER XII.

The Fruit which may be drawn from the Consideration of Eternal Evils.

ALL that has been said of the pains in hell is far short of that which really they are. There is great difference between the knowledge we have by relation, and that which we learn by experience. The Machabees knew, that the temple of the Lord was already profaned, deserted and destroyed. They had heard of it, and lamented it; but when they saw with their eyes the sanctuary lie desolate, the altar profaned, and the gates burned, there was then no measure in their tears. They tore their garments, cast ashes upon their heads, threw themselves upon the ground, and their complaints ascended as high as heaven. If, then, the relation and discourse of the pains of hell make us tremble, what shall be the sight and experience? Notwithstanding this, the consideration of what has been said may help us to form some conception of the terror and horror of that place of eternal sorrow. Let us, as St. Bernard says, descend into hell whilst we live, that we may not descend thither when we are dead. Let us draw some fruit from thence during our lives, from whence nothing but torment is to be had after death. The principal fruits, which may be drawn from that consideration, are these: In the first place, an ardent love and sincere gratitude towards our Creator, that, having so often deserved hell, he has not yet suffered us to fall into it. How many are there now in hell, who, for their first mortal sin, and only for that one, have been sent thither! and we, notwithstanding the innumerable sins, which we have committed, are yet spared. What did God find in us, that he should use a mercy towards us for so many sins, which he did not afford to others for so few? Why are we not then more grateful for so many benefits, which we have no ways deserved? How grateful would a damned person be, if God should free him from those flames, wherein he is tormented, and place him in the same condition we now are! What a life would he lead! what penance would he not undergo! what austerity would not appear a pleasure to him! and how grateful would he be to so merciful a Benefactor! He has done no less for us, but much more. For, if he has not drawn us out of hell, he has not thrown us into it, as we deserved, which is the greater favor. Tell me, if a creditor should cast that debtor into prison, who owed him a thousand ducats, and, after the enduring of much affliction, at last release him; or should suffer another, who owed him fifty thousand ducats, to go up and down free, without touching a thread of his garment; which of the debtors received

the greater benefit? I believe thou wilt say, the latter. More, then, are we indebted to God Almighty, and, therefore, ought to serve him better. Consider how a man would live, who should be restored to life, after he had been in hell. Thou shouldst live better, since thou art more indebted to Almighty God. St. Gregory (Lib. 4. Dial. cap. 36.) writes of one, who, though he had not been released out of hell, but only was upon the point of damnation, yet led afterwards such a life, that the change was admirable. The saint says, that a monk, called Peter, who, before he retired to the desert, was in a trance for some time as dead; and being restored to his senses, made this relation: that he had a sight of hell, and that he had seen in it great chastisements, and innumerable places full of fire; and that he knew some, who had been very powerful in the world, hanging in the midst of the flames; and himself being now at the brink, to be cast into the same, he saw on a sudden a bright shining angel, who withheld him, saying, "Return to thy body, and consider well, with what care and diligence it suits with thy profession, to lead thy life from henceforward." So it was, that, being returned to his body, he treated it with such austerity of penance, watches and fasts, that, although he should not have spoken a word, his manner of life did publish sufficiently what he had seen.

Secondly, we are taught to exercise an invincible patience in suffering the troubles and afflictions of this life, that, by enduring these thankfully, we may escape those of the other. He who shall consider the eternity of those torments which he deserves, will not grumble at the pains of this short life, how bitter soever. There is no state or condition upon earth, how necessitous, how poor, how miserable soever, which the damned would not endure, and think it an infinite happiness, if they might change with it. Neither is there any course of life so austere, which he, who had once experienced these burning flames, if he might live again, would not make more rigorous. He who has once deserved eternal torments, let him never murmur at temporal evils; let his mouth be ever stopped from complaining of the crosses or petty injuries offered him in this life, who has committed offences worthy the pains of the other. From this consideration, there was nothing which the saints would not willingly suffer, no penance which they would not undergo. Wherefore St. John the Evangelist, after he had spoken of the smoke which ascended from the torments of the damned, for a world of worlds, and that they did not rest by day or night, presently adds, "Here is the patience of the saints;" because, seeing that all the troubles of this life were temporal, and the torments of the other eternal, nothing that they endured seemed much to them. So did St. John Chrysostom (Chrys. tom. 5. Ep. 5. ad Theod.), and advises us to do the like, bearing with patience all temporal pains whatsoever,

with the consideration of the eternal. "From the consideration of little things (says he) let us frame a conjecture of the great. If thou go into a bath, and shalt find it excessive hot, think on hell; if thou art tormented with the heat, think on hell; if thou art tormented with the heat of some violent fever, pass to the consideration of those eternal flames, which burn without end; and think, that if a bath or fever so afflict thee, how shalt thou endure that river of fire." And further the same saint (Homil. 2. in 1. Ep. ad Thess.): "When thou shalt see any thing great in this present life, think presently of the kingdom of heaven, and so thou shalt not value it much; and when thou shalt see any thing terrible, think on hell, and thou wilt laugh at it. When the concupiscence or desire of any temporal thing shall afflict thee, think that the delight of sin is of no estimation, and that the pleasure of it is nothing. For if the fear of laws which are enacted upon earth be of that force, that they are able to deter us from evil actions, much more will the thought of things to come, and that immortal chastisement of eternal pain. If the fear of an earthly king divert us from many evils, how much more shall the fear of a King eternal?" If the sight of a dead man detain us, much more shall the thought of hell, and that eternal death. If we often think of hell, we shall never fall into it.

We ought also often to call to mind the evils of the next life, that we may more despise the pleasures of this; because temporal felicity often ends in eternal misery. All that is precious in the world, honor, wealth, fame, pleasure, all the splendor of the earth, are but smoke and a shadow, if we compare the small duration of them with the eternity of those torments in the other world. Put all the silver in the world together in one heap, all the gold, all the precious stones, diamonds, emeralds, with all other the richest jewels, all the triumphs of the Romans, all the luxuries of the Assyrians, &c., all would deserve to be of no other value than dirt, ignominy and gall, if to be possessed with hazard of falling at last into the pit of hell. Let us call to mind that sentence of our blessed Saviour: "What will it avail a man to gain the whole world, if he lose his soul?" If they should make us lords and masters, I say not of great wealth, but of the whole world, we should not admit of it, with the least hazard of being damned for ever. Let one enjoy all the contents and delights imaginable, let him be raised up to the highest pitch of honor, let him triumph with all the greatness of the world; all this is but a dream, if, after this mortal life, he finds himself at length plunged into hell-fire. Whosoever should consider the lamentable day, in which two sons and three daughters, and his wife, the empress, were put to death in the presence of the emperor Mauritius, and afterwards himself bereaved of life, by command of a dastardly coward and vicious fellow, no doubt but he would esteem as

very vain, and of no worth, all the twenty years of his reign in his powerful empire and majesty, though his punishment was not to last for ever, in regard he had the good fortune to save his soul. Wherefore, if one only disastrous day, after the enjoying of so much felicity and greatness of the world, for twenty years' space, is sufficient to cause a contempt of all that pomp, and make the same appear as smoke, not only one year of affliction, not a thousand ages, but eternity of torments, how will it make all human prosperity to seem nothing else but a shadow and a dream? If the sad death of one, though he saves his soul, shows the vanity of all human felicities; the lamentable death of one, who is damned to hell and an eternity of unspeakable misery, how will it make evident, that all felicity and human greatness is nothing but a smoke, a shadow, and nothing? Let us reflect a thought upon the emperor Heliogabalus, who gave so great a scope to all his sensual appetites, and was most exactly industrious in making use of time, to the advantage of his pleasures: what account are we to make of his two years and eight months' reign, if we give credit to Aurelius and Eutropius, turning our consideration to the other scene of his miserable death? For the Pretorian soldiers, having drawn him out of a sink or privy, where he had hid himself, then hauling him upon the ground, they threw him into another sink, most filthy and abominable; but in regard there was not room enough for his whole body, they pulled him out again, and, dragging him through the great place, called the Circus, and other public streets of Rome, at last they cast him into the Tiber, having first tied great stones about him, to the end he might never appear more, nor obtain interment. All this was done to the great content of the people, and approbation of the senate. Who should see this nice and effeminate prince wallowing in the sink, abused by his soldiers, and drowned in the Tiber, what estimate would he frame of all this greatness? But see him now in the horrid sink of hell, abused by the devils, and plunged into that pit of fire and brimstone, where he is to suffer excessive torments for all eternity; what will that short time of his empire seem, being compared, I do not say with three hundred thousand millions of years, but with an eternity of pains, which he is to suffer, causing all the past glory of his empire and splendor of his fortunes to vanish into smoke? You may look upon a wheel of squibs or fire-works, which, whilst it moves, casts forth a thousand lights and splendors, with which the beholders are much taken; but all at last ends in a little smoke and burned paper. So it is. Whilst the wheel of felicities was in motion, according to the style of St. James, that is to say, whilst our life lasts, its fortune and prosperity appeared most glorious; but ceasing, all comes to end in smoke; and he that fares best in it becomes a fire-brand of hell. Rabanus (Raban.

in Eccl.) said well, that when a strong fever, or some great unexpected change in his estate happens to one, it makes him forget all his former contents in health and wealth; his sickness and adversity taking up so the whole man as that he has no leisure to employ his thoughts upon any thing else; and if perhaps any passage of his former condition chance to come to his mind, it gives him no satisfaction, but rather augments his pain. Wherefore, if even temporal evils, though very short, are sufficient to make former felicities of many years vanish, what impression will temporal goods make in us, if we employ our thoughts upon eternal evils!

Besides this, the eternity of torments in hell, which is to be suffered hereafter without profit, may move us to husband the short time of this life, most to our advantage, and with the greatest fruit. How many miserable souls now suffer those eternal pains, for not employing one day in penance, nor endeavoring to make one good confession! What would a damned soul give for one quarter of an hour, out of so many days and years, which are lost, and shall not have one instant allowed him! Thou, who now livest and hast time, lose not that which imports so much, and once lost, can never be redeemed. Peter Reginaldus writes, that a holy religious man, being in prayer, heard a most lamentable voice; whereupon, demanding who he was, and why he lamented, it was answered, "I am one of the damned; and thou must know, that I, and the rest of the damned souls, lament and bewail nothing more bitterly, than to have lost time, in the sins we have committed." O miserable creatures, who, for having lost a short space of time, lose an eternity of felicity! They come to know too late the importance of that which they have lost, and shall never come to regain it. Let us now make use of time, whilst we may gain eternity; and let us not lose that with pleasure, which cannot be recovered with grief. Let us now weep for our sins with profit, that we may not weep for our pains without fruit. Let us hear what St. Bernard (Bernard. Serm. 16. in Cant.) says: "Who shall give water to my head, and who shall give a fountain of tears to mine eyes, that I may prevent weeping by weeping?" Let us now weep in time, and do penance with sorrow, that our tears may be dried up, and our sorrow forgotten, since eternal happiness is no less efficacious to make us forget the tears and grief of this life, than hell the pleasures of it. Wherefore Isaias says, "My former cares are forgotten, and are hid from mine eyes." Upon which words St. Jerome remarks, "It is the effect of mirth, and confession of the true God, that an eternal oblivion shall succeed precedent griefs. For if former evils shall be forgotten, it is not with the oblivion of memory, but with the succession of so much good; according to that, 'In the good day an oblivion of evil.'"

Lastly, let us draw from the consideration of hell, a perfect hatred to all mortal sin, since from the evil of sin proceeds that evil of pain. Terrible is the evil of sin, since it cannot be satisfied even with eternal flames. But this requires a larger consideration, which we are now come to.

CHAPTER XIII.

The infinite Guilt of mortal Sin, by which we lose the Felicity of Heaven, and fall into Eternal Evils.

THE horrible and stupendous malice of mortal sin is so foul and accursed, that, though committed in an instant, it deserves the torments of hell for all eternity; and an unlawful pleasure, enjoyed by a sinner, but for one moment, deprives and disinherits him of eternal felicity. Because, therefore, the scope of this work is to beget such disesteem of temporal goods, as for them we may not lose the eternal, I thought it not beside my purpose to procure, as much as I could, a horror and detestation of sin, which is the occasion of the loss of heaven; and therefore intend, in this place, to say something of the malice of it; the rather, because it conduces much to the knowledge of those differences, which are between things temporal and things eternal; whereof the most notable is, that as temporal goods are of that nature, that he who loves and seeks them with solicitude, most commonly falls into that horrible evil of sin; so he who loves and sets his heart on things eternal, secures himself against it. Besides, having treated of the eternal pains of hell, that we may not wonder at the severity of the divine justice, it was necessary, that we should say something of the horrible and grievous malice of sin, for which so infinite a punishment is inflicted. Many admire, that a sin committed in an instant should deserve the eternal punishment of so terrible and cruel torments. But this proceeds from their ignorance; because they know not the malice of a mortal sin. St. Austin, whose deep understanding was enlightened by a special grace, wondered rather, that there were not two hells, and that a new one was not created for that Christian, who durst offend his God, after he was incarnated for his redemption. And divines generally affirm, that the chastisement of sin in hell is much less than it deserves. Who will not, then, admire this monster of mischief, that being but one evil, draws after it so many, and that one sin should deserve so many punishments; and yet have a malice capable of more?

A terrible case, that for a sin, which passed only in thought,

which none knew but God, and he who committed it, and perhaps not he neither, as being uncertain and doubtful of his own consent, and which endured no longer than an instant; should yet be punished with so real and eternal pains. The reason is, that such is the intention of malice in sin, that it is equivalent to the extension of an infinite evil. The punishment and the sin are like the shadow and the body; the sin is the body, and the solid evil; the punishment but as the shadow. And in the reason of a true and real evil, the sin as far exceeds the punishment of hell-fire as a man exceeds his shadow. For as that is truly and really a man, and this but a man in appearance; so sin is truly an evil; the pain only appears so, but is in truth a good, being an act of justice caused by God, who can cause no evil. Hence you may trace the malignity of a sin, in comparison whereof, the pains of hell, although so terrible, are not evils, but their shadow; and may also learn, that the commission of a mortal sin is as much to be feared above the pains of eternity, as a real sword before its shadow. The sword kills; the shadow at most can but fright. So a mortal sin is that which takes away the life of the soul; the pains can only frighten us; but without sin, the torments of hell are not of power to kill or hurt us. See, then, what a fool thou art, if, to avoid some temporal evil, thou presumest to commit a mortal sin, which is as great a folly as to fly from the shadow of a sword, and run thyself upon the point.

It is true, that sin is really an evil, and the eternal fire of hell, in comparison of it, but a shadow; but by this shadow, we may judge the greatness of the substance, and by the terribleness of the punishment, the grievousness of the sin. For as by the shadow, we know the bulk of the body, although we see it not; so by the pains of hell, we conjecture the malice and enormity of sin, which appears not. What would we say of a body, which, the sun being at mid-day, and in his height, should cast a shadow of an infinite extension? This could not be, unless the height of that body should rise to the sphere of the sun, and being placed opposite to it, should thence produce so vast a shadow. In this manner, sin causes a pain of infinite extension, because the intention of its malice reaches so high, as to oppose itself to God, who being the chief good, sin must needs become the chief evil: I speak of mortal sin. If we, therefore, tremble at the thought of hell, we may shake at that of sin. Who is not amazed, that God should behold a creature of his own burning in flames, and should there leave him without compassion for all eternity? But this is not caused by want of goodness in God, but by excess of malice in sin; not because the mercy of God has limits, but because the wickedness of man has none. So heinous, then, is the offence of a mortal sin, that eternal flames cannot purge it, nor torments give a greater satisfaction, than what is due to the divine justice. This

is that, which the Lord said by Oseas: "Ephraim provoked me to wrath in his bitternesses;" that is, as St. Jerome interprets it, with his wickedness he made me bitter and rigorous, who of myself was sweet and merciful. Such is the grievousness of sin, that it makes the sweetness, bounty and divine pity of God not to compassionate that soul, which is the bitterness of hell.

SECTION II

Sin is, then, an infinite offence against God. Let it not, therefore, appear much to him, who knows the ineffable greatness and perfection of the Divine Essence, that, though committed in an instant, it should deserve an eternity of punishment. For by how much greater is the majesty of God, which is despised, by so much greater is the injury offered him; and, therefore, as the majesty of God, which is despised by sin, is infinite, so the despite of it must contain in itself a certain kind of infinity. By how much greater is the reverence due to a person, by so much greater is the disrespect and affront offered him; and as to God there is due an infinite reverence, so the injury done him is of an inexplicable malice, which, with no good works of a pure creature, how many and great soever, can be expiated. "So great (says a grave doctor, Less. de perfec. div. l. 13. cap. 16. nu. 187.) is the malignity of a mortal sin, that, being put in the balance of divine justice, it would outweigh all the good works of all the saints, although they were a thousand times more and greater than they are. Which consideration, although most fearful, yet it ought not to seem incredible; because the good works, with which God is honored by his saints, although, considered in themselves, they are of great value, and, by his grace, worthy of eternal life, yet in respect of God, to whom they add nothing, and who is nothing better by them, they are not valuable; to whose divine goodness, not only they, but infinitely more and greater, are but a debt. But for God to be despised by his creature, who by infinite titles is obliged to serve him, and who ought to bear him (if he could) an infinite love, and reverence him with an infinite honor, is a thing so highly repugnant to his majesty and benefits, that he apprehends it more in the nature of evil, than all the good works of the world, in the nature of good; and if God were capable of grief, would more afflict him, than all the pious actions of the saints content him." Certainly, amongst men, the honor which is given to one, who deserves it, takes not so much as a contempt done to him who merits it not. A king values not much the honor which is given him by his vassals, because he takes it not for a courtesy, but a duty; but to be outraged and scorned, especially by one whom he had favored with his benefits, sticks near to his heart; for not only kings, but all men, think honor due to them, and

disrespect an injury. And as fire, being inordinately applied to the hand, makes it sensible of a greater pain than it can receive delight by being sound, because excessive heat is repugnant, and a natural temper due to it; so, disrespects and affronts offered to a noble personage, which are repugnant to his worth, grieve him more than he can be pleased with all the honors and respect due to him. There is no resentment amongst men so quick as that of dishonor, nor any thing which causes more grief and vexation. If some person of quality should have his hat plucked off from his head in scorn, and receive a dozen of bastinadoes from some base fellow, that affront would not be recompensed, although a thousand should put off their caps to him, and kiss his hand. By this may, in some sort, appear the stupendous irreverence and incivility towards God, in a mortal sin; insomuch, as St. Paul calls it kicking against, or spurning, the Son of God. And therefore it is no marvel, if one only grievous offence outweigh all the service and honors done by the saints and holy angels, and that all that they have, or can do, cannot in rigor satisfy for one mortal sin. This is the reason why it was necessary that God should become man, since the divine justice could not be appeased with less than the satisfaction of a divine Person. Let those, therefore, cease to marvel, that a momentary sin should be punished with eternal torments, who see, that for sin God was made man, and died for man. And certainly, it is a far greater wonder that God should die for the sin of another, than that man should, for his own sin, suffer an eternal punishment. And if the malice of sin be so exorbitant, that nothing could satisfy for it less than God, it is nothing strange, that that which has no limit nor bound in evil, should have no limit in punishment, but should exceed all time, and be eternal. And if a treason, committed against a temporal prince, be chastised with loss of life and goods of the traitor, and with the punishment also of his posterity, which, inasmuch as concerns the prince, is eternal; why should not the offence of a vile worm against his Creator be punished with general pains? The greatness of honor decreases and grows less, according to the height and dignity of the person honored, so as that honor, which, done to an ordinary person, would seem excessive, given to a prince, is nothing. And, on the contrary, the greatness of an injury rises and grows higher, according to the worth of him that is injured; so as God, who is infinite, being the person offended, deserves that the injury done to him should be chastised with an infinite punishment, at least in time, or that he who satisfies for it should be a person of infinite worth and perfection.

From hence it follows, that the guilt of mortal sin being so horrid, there can be no satisfaction of a pure creature sufficient to expiate it, nor any merit, which can deserve the pardon. Let us grant, that Adam had never offended, nor contaminated the whole

race of mankind with his sin: let us grant, that there had never been a sin of David, St. Paul, St. Austin, St. Mary Magdalen, or any other man or angel whatsoever; and that there had been but one only mortal sin, the least of all others, committed by a man in a wilderness, without witness, by night; and that only in thought; yet such were the grievousness of this one sin, that for it no punishment of the creatures were sufficient to satisfy the divine justice. If God should ruin heaven, throw down the stars, dry up the sea, confound the elements, and strike all mankind with thunder; all would not give an equal satisfaction to the divine justice for this one sin. For this destruction of heaven, and earth, and man, were but of things finite and limited; and the injured person is God, who is infinite; and between finite and infinite there is no proportion. In like manner, no merit of mere creatures were sufficient to deserve pardon for it. If all mankind should clothe themselves in sackcloth, and fast with bread and water; if all the martyrs should offer up their torments, and all the confessors their penances, and the very Mother of God all her virtues, and should dissolve herself into tears; all were not enough to deserve the pardon of that one sin: only the Son of God could be sufficient satisfaction. Let men consider this; let them weigh the grievousness of a sin against God, and let them tremble at the very thought, that possibly they may commit it.

SECTION III.

The offence, which is done to God Almighty, by a mortal sin, is in itself, and its own substance, most grievous, as we have already observed; yet there are certain circumstances, which do much increase the good or evil of that action, whereto they are annexed; and that of sin is so accursed and abominable on all parts, that not one or two, but all circumstances joined together, concur to make the insolence and malice of it most insupportable. We will, therefore, consider them one by one. Tully (Tull. in Rhetor.), whom St. Thomas (S. Tho. 1. 2. q. 7. art. 3.) and the rest of divines follow, makes them seven, which contribute much to the qualification of a moral action: The first, who it is that does it; the second, what it is he does; the third, where he does it; the fourth, with what helps; the fifth, wherefore; the sixth, after what manner; and the seventh, when he does it. To these seven, Aristotle (Arist. Ethic. 3.) adds another, about what it is. These circumstances are in absolute actions, which have no relation to another. For in actions, which have a respect to a third person, another circumstance ought much to be considered; which is, against whom it is. Let us now see how, in all those circumstances, sin is most abominable and accursed. For if we consider who it is that sins, it is a most vile and wretched man, who pre-

sumes to lift up his hands against his Creator. And what is man, but a vessel of dung, a sink of corruption, and by birth a slave of the devil? And yet he dares offend his Maker. An offence against God were most grievous, though from another God (if it were possible) infinite and equal to himself; but that his creatures should be so audacious against their omnipotent Lord, is beyond amazement.

But what is that which a sinner does when he offends? It is, according to St. Anselm, an endeavor to pluck the crown from the head of God, and place it upon his own. It is, according to St. Bernard, to desire to murder his God. It is, according to the Apostle St. Paul, to kick and spurn against the Son of God. It is to crucify again the Lord of life. If any of these things were attempted against a majesty upon earth, it were enough to make the offender's flesh to be plucked off with pincers, to have him torn in pieces with four horses, to pull down his house, and sow the place with salt, and make his whole lineage infamous. If such an offence, committed by one man against another, between whom the difference is not great, being both equal in nature, be so heinous, what shall it deserve, being committed against God, the Lord and Creator of all, whose immense greatness is infinitely distant from the nature of his creature? O good God, who is able to explicate what a sinner does against thee and himself? He despises thy majesty, rases out thy law from his heart, laughs at thy justice, scorns thy threats, despises thy promises, makes a solemn renunciation of thy glory thou hast promised him, and all to bind himself an eternal slave to Satan; desiring rather to please thine enemy than thee, who art his father, his friend, and all his good; desiring rather to die eternally, by displeasing thee, than to enjoy heaven for ever by serving thee.

Let us now see where and in what place a sinner presumes to sin, and be a traitor to his God. It is even in his own world, in his own house, and knowing that his Creator looks upon him, he offends him. If a sin were committed where God could not see it, it were yet an enormous fault; but to injure his Creator before his face, what an unspeakable impudence! If he who sins could go into another world, where God did not inhabit, and there in secret, under the earth, should sin after such a manner, as only himself should know it, yet it were a temerarious boldness; but to sin in his own house, which is his world, what hell does it not deserve? For a man only to lay his hand upon his sword, in the palace of a king, is capital, and deserves death. For a sinner, then, by his sins, to spurn and crucify the Son of God, in the house of his Father, and before his face, what understanding can conceive the greatness of such a malice? And, therefore, David with reason dissolved himself into tears, because he had sinned in the presence of God, and with a grief, which pierced his

heart, cried out, "I have done evil before thee." Besides this, we not only sin against God in his own house, but even in his arms, whilst we are upheld by his omnipotency. If there were a son so wicked, who, whilst he was cherished in his mother's bosom, should strike and buffet her, and endeavor to kill her with his poniard, every one would think that child some devil incarnate. How, then, dares man offend God, who sustains, preserves, and has redeemed him? Certainly, that Christian ought to be esteemed worse than a devil.

The heinousness of this malice in sin is much augmented by the helps which a sinner uses to effect it. For he turns those very divine benefits, which he has received from God, against him who gave them. The sense which men usually have of ingratitude, is most apprehensive. If to forget a benefit be ingratitude, to despise it is an injury; but to use it against the benefactor, I know not how to call it. This does he who sins, making use of those creatures which God created for his service, to offend him, and convert his divine benefits into arms against God himself. What could we say, if a king, to honor his soldier, should make him a knight, arm him with his own arms, and should gird his sword about him with his own hands, and that the soldier, so soon as he was possessed of the sword, should draw it against the king, and murder him? This wickedness, which seems impossible amongst men, is ordinary in man towards God, who, being honored so many ways by his Creator, and enriched by so many benefits, for as much as in him lies, bereaves God of his honor, and, according to St. Bernard, desires to bereave him of his life. His understanding, which he received from God, he uses in finding out a way to execute his sin; with his hands he performs it, and with all his power offends him who gave them. Besides, the impudence of man arrives at that height, that he makes God himself assist him to sin. This is that which our Lord much complains of, when he says by his prophet, "You made me serve you in your wickedness;" because God concurring to every action and natural motion of man, who, without his concurrence, could neither move hand, nor foot, nor tongue; man disposing his tongue to murmur, and his hand to steal, makes use of the concurrence of God, against God himself. Who is so pitiless and inhuman, to force the father to assist in the murder of his only son, compelling the father's hand to execute the stroke which is to pierce the heart of his only-begotten? Equivalent to this is done by a sinner, making God to concur to an action, by which man sinning, crucifies again the Son of God. What cruelty is this in a sinner, who, for this only impiety, deserves a thousand deaths!

But if we shall consider why man does this, it is a circumstance which will amaze us at the malice of sin. Why does a sinner

give this disgust to his God? Wherefore does he despise his Creator? Wherefore is he a traitor to the Lord of the world? Wherefore does he kick and spurn at Jesus Christ? Wherefore does he abhor his Redeemer? Wherefore crucifies he the Son of God? What reason has he for so monstrous a wickedness? Is it, perchance, because the world should not be ruined? Is it, perchance, because his salvation stands upon it? Is it, perhaps, to make himself a God? Is it, perhaps, in respect, or for love of another God? No, it is none of these, but only for a base and filthy pleasure; for a foolish fancy of man, because he will, and no more. O horrid insolence! O mad fury of men, who without a cause so grievously offend their Creator! How is it, that the heavens resolve not into thunderbolts, and throw a thousand deaths upon them, who do and dare, by their sins, irritate and offend so good and gracious a God?

The manner also of our sinning would astonish any who should seriously consider it. It is with so much impudence, contempt of God, and such a Luciferian pride; after having heard so many examples of his chastisements executed upon sinners; after having seen, that the most beautiful and glorious of all the angels, and with him innumerable others, were thrown from heaven, and made fire-brands in hell, for one sin, and that only in thought; after having seen the first man, for one sin of gluttony, banished from the paradise of pleasure, into this valley of tears, despoiled of so many supernatural endowments, and condemned to death; after having seen the world drowned, and the cities of Pentapolis burned with fire from heaven; after having seen those seditious against Moses swallowed by the earth, and, with their children, goods and family, sink alive into hell; after having known that so many have been damned for their offences; after that the Son of God had suffered upon the cross for our sins; after all this to sin, is an impudence never heard of, and an intolerable contempt of the divine justice. Besides, what greater scorn and contempt of God than this, that God, who is worthy of all honor and love, and the devil, who is our declared enemy, professing both to our souls, the one to save them, the other to torment them in eternal flames, yet we adhere to Satan, and prefer him before Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer, and that so much to our prejudice, as by the loss of eternal glory, and captivating ourselves to eternal torments and slavery? No way of injuring can be imagined more injurious, than when, by the interposing of some other vile and infamous, he, who is worthy of all love and honor, is put by and slighted. The manner, also, of sinning aggravates the sin, as the sinner does, by losing thereby eternal goods. Though he who sins lose nothing, yet the offence against God were great, and the affront to reason itself not inconsiderable. But, well knowing the great damage, and punishments likewise, that attend

sin, and the evident hazard he runs, and yet to sin, is a strange temerity and impudence.

If we shall likewise consider, when it is that we sin, we shall find this circumstance no less to aggravate our offences, than the former ; because we now sin, when we have seen the Son of God nailed to the cross, that we should not sin ; when we have seen God so sweet to us, as to be incarnate for our good, humbling himself to be made man, and subjecting himself to death, even the death of the cross, for our redemption ; having instituted the holy sacraments, for a remedy against sin, especially that of his most holy body and blood, which was a most immense expression of his love. To sin after we had seen God so good to us, so obliging to us, with those inconceivable favors, is a circumstance which ought much to be pondered in our hearts, and might make us forbear the offending of so loving a Lord. And that Christian who sins after all this, is to be esteemed worse than a devil. For the devil never sinned against that God, who had shed his blood for him, or who had been made an angel for him, or who had pardoned so much as one sin of his. When those sinned, who were under the law of nature, they also had not seen the Son of God die for their salvation, as a Christian has ; for which, as St. Austin says, there ought a new hell to be made for him. And there is no doubt, but Christians will deserve new torments, and greater than those who have not had the knowledge of God, nor received so many benefits from him. This is confirmed by what is written of St. Macarius, the abbot, who finding in the desert a dead man's head, and removing it with his staff out of the way, it began to speak, which he hearing, demanded who it was. It answered, "I am a priest of the gentiles, who heretofore dwelt in this place, and am now, together with many of them, in the middle of a burning fire, so great, that the flames encompass us both above and beneath." "And is there (replied the saint) any place of greater torment?" "Yes (said the dead) ; greater is that, which they suffer who are below us. For we, who know not God, are not so severely dealt with, as those who, knowing, have denied him, or not complied with his holy will. These are below us, and suffer far greater torments than we."

These are the circumstances observed by Tully, and are all found to aggravate the guilt of our sins. Neither is that, added by Aristotle, wanting ; which is, about what. About what do we offend God ? About what happens this great presumption, but about things which import not, but rather injure us ; about complying with a sensual gust, which in the end bereaves us of health, of honor, of substance, and even of pleasure itself ; suffering many days of grief, for a moment of delight ; about things of the earth, which are vile and transitory ; and about goods of the world, which are false, short and deceitful. What would we

say, if, for a thing of so small value as a straw, one man should kill another? No more than a straw are all the felicities of the world, in respect of those in heaven; and for a thing of so small consideration, we are traitors to God, and crucify Christ again, and that a thousand times, as often as we sin mortally against him.

Lastly, against whom we offend much aggravates our sins. For, besides that God is most perfect, most wise, beautiful, immense, omnipotent, infinite, we sin against him, who infinitely loves us, who suffers us, who heaps his benefits and rewards upon us. To do evil to those who make much of them, even wild beasts abhor it. What is it, then, for thee to injure him, who loved thee more than himself; who has done thee all good, that thou shouldst do no evil? Fear, then, this Lord, reverence his majesty, love his goodness, and offend him no more. This only consideration, to have sinned against so good a God, was so grievous to David, that, in his penitential Psalms, he exclaims with tears, and cries out from the bottom of his heart, "Against thee only have I sinned." For although he had sinned against Urias, and against all Israel by his ill example, yet it seemed to him, he had only sinned against God, when he considered the infinity of his being, the immenseness of that love, which he had so grievously offended. Sin, then, is on all parts most virulent, on all parts spits forth venom. Behold it on every side, it still seems worse; for being the chief evil, it can on no side appear good: all is monstrous, all poison, all detestable, all most evil, and, therefore, deserves all evil. And it is not much, that that should be chastised with eternal torments, which opposes itself to the sweetness of an infinite holiness.

SECTION IV.

Sin is so evil, that it is every way evil. It is not only evil as it is an injury to God, but it is evil in itself, in its own nature. For if there were no God, or that God were not offended with it, yet it were a most abominable and horrid evil, the greatest of all evils, and the cause of all. In regard of this deformity and filthiness of sin, the philosophers judged it to be abhorred above all things. Aristotle (Aristot. 3. Eth.) said, it were better to die, than to do any thing against the good of virtue. And Seneca and Peregrinus with more resolution said, "Although I were certain that men should not know it, and that God would pardon it, yet I would not offend for the very filthiness of sin." For this Tully said, that nothing could happen to man more horrible than a fault. And even those philosophers, who denied the immortality of the soul, and the providence of God, affirmed, that nothing should make us commit it. And there have not wanted some gentiles, who have suffered great extremities to avoid a vicious act. Democles, as Plutarch (Plut. in Demetrio) writes,

chose rather to be boiled in scalding water, than to consent to a filthy act. With reason Hippo is celebrated amongst the Greek matrons, who chose rather to die than to offend. Neither was that horror less, which Verturius conceived against uncleanness, who suffered prison, whips and rigorous torments, rather than he would sin against chastity. Equal to this, was that of the most beautiful youth, Espurina, of whom Valerius Maximus and St. Ambrose (Amb. l. 3. de Virg.) write, that he slashed and wounded his fair face, that it should not give occasion to others of offence, even by desire. All those were gentiles, who knew not Christ crucified for man, nor saw hell open for the punishment of sinners, nor fled from sin, because it was an offence to God, but only for the enormity and filthiness it had in itself. This made them endure prisons and tortures rather than admit it. What, then, should Christians do, who know their Redeemer died, to the end they should not sin, and how much sin is offensive to God? Certainly, they ought rather to give a thousand lives and souls, than once to injure their Creator by committing an offence, which not only gentiles, but even nature has in horror, which has planted in brute breasts, although they cannot sin, yet a natural aversion from that which looks like sin. Why should not men, then, who are capable of reason, and have an obligation to God's commandment, say and think with St. Anselm (Lib. de simil. c. 19.), "If I should see on this part the filthiness of sin, and on the other the terror of hell, and it were necessary for me to fall into one of them, I would rather cast myself into hell, than admit of sin; for I had rather enter pure into hell, than to enjoy the kingdom of heaven contaminated with sin." Whosoever, then, he be, who is infected with that horrible evil of a mortal sin, he cannot choose but be most miserable and wretched. For, as St. Chrysostom (Chrysost. tom. 5. Ser. 5. de jej.) says, the greatest evil is to be evil. And although the surgeon do not cut the cankered flesh, yet the ulcerated patient will not be freed from his infirmity; so, although God should not punish a sinner, yet he would not be free from the evil, death, misery and abomination of sin. And, therefore, St. Austin (Aug. to. 8. in Ps. xlix.) says, "Although we could cause that the day of judgment should not come, yet we ought not to live ill." This monstrous deformity of sin, our Lord was pleased to express by a visible monster, and that after a most strange manner, as is related by Villaveus. (Villaveus, lib. 8. c. 35.) He writes, that in the year 1298, Cassanus, king of the Tartars, with an army of two hundred thousand horse, entering Syria, made himself master of it, and brought a great terror upon all those neighboring countries; insomuch, that the king of Armenia delivered him his daughter, although she was a Christian, and he an infidel, to be his wife. Not long after, the queen proved with child, and, when

her time came, was delivered, not of a child, but of a most horrible and deformed monster. Whereat the barbarous king being astonished and incensed, by the advice of his council, commanded that she should be put to death as an adulteress. The poor lady, grieving to die with the imputation of a sin, whereof she was innocent, commended herself to our Saviour, and by divine inspiration desired that, before her death, the thing which she had brought forth might be baptized; which was granted, and no sooner performed, but that monster became a most beautiful and goodly boy: and the king, amazed at the miracle, with many others of his subjects, became Christians, acknowledging, by what had happened, the beauty of grace, and the deformity of sin, although the deformity proceeded not from any actual sin, either mortal or venial, from which the child was free, but only from original guilt, which, without the fault of his proper will, descended to him from his parents. The deformity of sin comes from the contrariety of it to reason, which renders a sinner more foul and ugly than the most horrid monster, and more dead in soul than a putrid and dead carcass. Pliny admires the force of lightning, which melts the gold and silver, and leaves the purse which contained it untouched. Such is sin, which kills the soul, and leaves the body sound and entire. It is a flash of lightning, sent from hell, and worse than hell itself, and such leaves the soul which it has blasted.

What shall I then say of the evils which it causes? I will only say this, that though it were the best thing in the world, yet, for the evil effects which it produces, it ought to be avoided more than death. It bereaves the soul of grace, banishes the Holy Ghost, deprives it of the right of heaven, despoils man of all his merits, makes him unworthy of divine protection, and condemns a sinner to eternal torments in the other world, and in this to many disasters; for there is neither plague, war, famine, nor infirmity of body, whereof sin has not been in some sort the occasion; and, therefore, those who weep for their afflictions, let them change the object of their tears, and weep for the cause, which is their sins. These are they which ought to be lamented; these only deserve our tears, and all the tears in the world are not sufficient to bewail the least of them. When our Saviour was led to be crucified, he commanded they should not weep for him, but for their sons. Those sons are our sins, engendered from our corrupt nature; let us weep for them. Finally, such is the malice of a mortal sin, that he who commits it deserves the eternal pains of hell; and we ought rather to suffer a thousand hells, than once to commit it.

The love of things temporal opens the way to this monster of malice, and the desire of things eternal shuts it up. Let every one, therefore, consider where he places his affections. Let him

hear Ecclesiastes, who says, "The heart of a wise man is in his right hand, and the heart of a fool in his left;" because the wise man places his affections in that which is eternal, and the fool in that which is temporal, as St. Jerome interprets it, who says, "He who is wise, ever thinks of the world to come, which leads him to the right hand; and he who is a fool, thinks only of the present, which is placed on the left." How deceived shall the lovers of the world find themselves, when they shall see, that, for their sins, they are placed on the left hand of the Son of God, Judge of the quick and the dead! and how shall the lovers of heaven rejoice, to be placed on his right, as heirs of eternal glory! Abundance and prosperity in temporal goods used to be a greater occasion of sin, than either a moderate fortune, or an absolute poverty. Wherefore, Christ, our Redeemer, counselled those who desired to follow him in perfection, that they should pluck from their hearts all affections, which either had or might be occasion of sin. When the Machabees recovered Jerusalem, and, entering into the temple, found the altar of holocausts profaned, there was a great doubt amongst them, whether they should use it, because it had been some time dedicated to God, or destroy it, because it had been employed in the service of the devil. The Scripture says, that a good counsel came into their thoughts, which was to destroy it, and make a new one. This good counsel let us follow; let us destroy what has or may be an occasion of sin; and if the Machabees plucked down that which had been dedicated to God, because it had been a means for others to sin, let us quit the occasion, wherein not others, but we ourselves, have offended, which are our affections to temporal goods, and settle them upon the eternal.

THE
FIFTH BOOK

OF THE

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TEMPORAL AND
ETERNAL.

CHAPTER I.

Notable Differences between the Temporal and Eternal; the one being the End, the other the Means. Where is also treated of the End for which Man was created.

HITHERTO we have spoken of the difference and distance between the temporal and the eternal, comparing the one with the other, and considering them rather in their proper nature and substance, than the exterior respects and relations which they have to others. We will now begin to consider them from thence also, that it may appear, that the things of the earth (on what side soever you look upon them) are most vile and despicable, but the eternal of great worth and value. There are many things which, although in themselves they are held as vile and sordid, yet, for some respect or circumstance, become of great esteem. But things temporal, as well in their own proper essence and being, as in the extrinsical relations and respects they have to others, as they are amongst angels most contemptible, so ought they to be amongst men; because really, and in themselves, they are so. Vile and base they are, because little, mutable and transitory. And although in their own nature they were most precious and eternal, yet with us they ought to be of no value, because they are our means, and not our end; created to be our slaves, and to serve us, and not adored by us as masters, because they have been the instrument of our sins; and because the Son of God descended from heaven, and died, that we might despise them. These circumstances, although they were in themselves of worth and value, yet to us ought to render them most odious and contemptible.

Here, then, is the great difference between the temporal and the eternal, that the one is the end, and the other but the means; the eternal is the end of man, but of the temporal man himself is the end. The eternal is man's utmost perfection, and his perpetual happiness; the temporal only to be made use of for ob-

taining the eternal; so as the eternal, being our end, is to be loved and desired for itself, the temporal to be made no account of, but as it may conduce to the obtaining of the eternal. This being a matter of so great importance, it is fitting that we seriously consider it. Open, then, thine eyes, O man! and reflect wherefore thou wert born. All things have some end, for which they are, and thou also oughtest to have one. Thou camest not into the world for nothing; for something thou wert created. Open thine eyes, and see for what, and having found it, wander not from it; for if thou dost, thou art for ever lost. What traveller sets not before his eyes the place whither he intends to go and rest? what artificer, who proposes not to himself some idea, which he is to imitate in his work? Wherefore, then, dost thou live without thinking why life was given to thee? Know, that thou wert born for God, and for nothing less than God and his service. For this, life was bestowed upon thee; for this, thou wert drawn from a not-being, to a being, and didst pass from nothing to a reasonable creature, so many thousands remaining uncreated, who would have served God (if they had a being) better than thyself. See, then, what thou owest him for this bounty; wherein are included two most incomparable benefits: the one for having created thee, setting aside so many worthier creatures; the other, for having given thee the most noble and excellent end, that possibly can be imagined, which is himself. When the children of Israel passed the Red sea, and Pharaoh and his soldiers were drowned in the pursuit, the Lord would have them celebrate this great benefit for ever; and Moses and all the people sung praises and thanks to the Lord for their deliverance. See, then, what thou owest to God, for having passed thee from a not-being to a being, an infinity of other creatures possible remaining drowned in the abyss of nothing. Forget not, therefore, the benefit of thy creation, by which from nothing thou becamest a man, and wert made capable of eternal happiness. David forgot it not, and, therefore, to his 75th Psalm, gives this remembrance for a title, "For the end, for him who passes," or leaps from the other part; because he who passes from nothing, to be a creature capable of reason and glory, ought always to look upon the end for which he was created, and, from that consideration, to make a change of his life, as David did of his; who confesses, in the same psalm, that his change came from the right hand of the Most High. Let us then, as he did, remember to change our customs; from tepid to become fervent, and from sinners, just; because the end for which we were created is only God. This only consideration of so high an end, will be able to work a change in us. And for this reason, David gave this title to another psalm, "To the end; for those that are to be changed or altered." The holy prophet well knew the importance of this mindfulness of our last end, and therefore he repeated it in his psalms, to the end, that having our attention

always fixed upon it, we should not cease to aim at it, nor spoil our intentions, by the mixture of other thoughts of less consideration; as he gives to understand in the inscription of his 74th Psalm, which says, "Unto the end, corrupt not." Another version says, "To the end, lose not;" as if he should say, Look upon the end for which thou art created, to the end thou mayst not lose it. Let us also consider, that glory being no ways due to our nature, yet God out of his mercy created us to enjoy it; and when he might have made us for a natural felicity and perfection, was pleased to create us for a supernatural. Other creatures he made for us, but us for himself. There is no creature has a more noble end than we; there is neither seraphim, nor archangel, that surpasses us in this. Let us, therefore, know the value of it, that we may not lose it, and with it ourselves.

Consider, also, that if God should not have made thee for himself, nor to the end thou mightst serve him, but had left thee free and at liberty, and had only given thee a being, yet even for that thou owest him all that thou art. The son, although the father be not his end, yet owes him all respect and reverence, because he begot him. The husbandman, who plants a tree, has a right to the fruit. God, therefore, who created and planted thee, has a right to thee and all that thou art. And if his right be such for making thee, it is no less for ordaining thee for himself. There is no dominion so absolute (as both divines and philosophers affirm) as that of the end over those things which are in order to it; insomuch, that Marsilius Ficinus (Marsil. Ficin. lib. 1. Epist.) says, the end is a lord more excellent than those things which, as servants and ministers, relate to it. For this reason man, although he be neither the creator, nor utmost end of corporal things, yet, because he is their immediate end, and that they were ordained for his use, is their lord, and God, who is the utmost end of man and them, is the Lord of all.

Philo calls the end, the head of things. For as a prince is the absolute head and lord of his vassals and kingdom, so the end is lord and head of those things which have a relation to it; and therefore man, who is wholly from God, and for God, ought not to stir a hand or foot, but in order to his service. One of the philosophers calls the end the cause of causes; another, the principle of all causes. If, therefore, to God, because he is thy efficient cause, thou owest what thou art, for being thy final cause, thou owest him more than thou art. For this obligation looks not upon that which thou hast received, which is thy finite and limited being, but upon that for which thou art ordained, which is a being divine, infinite and without limit. Even God himself, as he is the efficient cause of things, does, as it were, serve himself, as he is the chief good and final cause of things, and does not make them but for this end. What right, then, hast thou to work for any thing but God, since God does not, nor

will work for any thing but himself. The end is the cause of causes ; and, therefore, if thou owest thyself to God, for being thy Maker, thou owest thyself to him for being thy end ; for he had not been thy Maker, if it had not been for some end, which was the cause of thy creation.

SECTION II.

Consider the force of the end in the several orders of things natural, artificial and moral, that thou mayst from hence gather, what force it ought to have in things supernatural. With what violence do the elements tend to their centre, because it is their end ! With what force does a stone fall from high, and with what violence does it press to its natural place, and bear down all before it ! And the fire, that it may attain its sphere, how it mounts above the highest hills and rocks ! Consider a great stone, hung in the air by some cable, how it strives to get loose, and, being at liberty, with what violence it falls upon the earth, with what speed and earnestness, without stay or diversion to one part or other, it tends straight to its centre. In this manner thou oughtest to seek after thy Lord God, with all the powers of thy soul, with all the forces of thy body, and all the affections of thy heart ; all thy inclinations are to tend that way ; thou art to go directly to him, without diverting on either hand, or looking upon any creature, which may detain thee, bearing down all things temporal before thee. A stone, that it may attain its end, sticks not to fall into water, fire, or to be dashed in a thousand pieces ; and thou, that thou mayst attain thy God, art not to stop at any thing, nor at the loss of goods, or honor, or at the very tearing of thy members in pieces ; and, as our Saviour says, " If thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, or cut off thy foot or hand, if it offend thee ; for it is better to enter into heaven blind or lame, than to fall into hell-fire sound and entire." Things natural find no quiet but in their centre ; and the mariner's needle rests not, but when it beholds the north ; no more shall the soul ever meet with repose but in God. And certainly, the cause of the greatest miseries and afflictions in the world proceeds from our deviating from God, who is our only end and eternal happiness. Let the heart of man, therefore, undeceive itself, for it shall never find quiet and content, but in its Creator.

If we come to things artificial ; those which are not directed to some end, what are they but a disorderly confusion ? If a painter should draw his lines, without proposing any idea to himself, what would be the issue of his work but a great blot ? If in painting some great captain, he should, instead of a sword, place in his hand a distaff, what a ridiculous figure would he make ? If a statuary should give a number of great strokes upon a piece of wood, without intention of making an image, he would do

nothing but weary himself, and spoil the wood and his instruments. This thou dost in all thy works, when thou lookest not upon God and eternity as thy end ; thou dost only make a blot of thy life, and lovest thyself and those creatures, which thou usest otherwise than for the obtaining of heaven. God created thee according to his image, to the end thou shouldst perfect that image, and make it every day more like to thy Creator. But thou, not looking upon him in thy actions, makest thyself a monster, and confoundest and blottest out his divine image. Finally, as all that is done in art, without order to the end, is error ; so all that thou dost without looking upon God as thy utmost end, is confusion and perdition of thyself. Reflect, then, wherein thou mayst at last conclude ; since thou hast so often forgotten God, and wandered from thy end.

If we look upon moral works or human actions, when they are not proportioned to their ends, what are they but madness and indiscretion ? for what is madness, but a diversion of things from their end ? If one who were desirous to avoid cold, should strip himself naked, and fly from the fire, would not all say this man were mad ? and wherein consists his madness, but in not fitting things to the end he aims at ? Thou art no wiser thyself, if, desiring and seeking thy own good and happiness, thou fliest from God, and dost not follow him in all thy actions. This, as St. Austin notes, is the error of man, who naturally loving happiness, by mistaking the way to find it, becomes miserable. Who but a fool or a madman, fit to be bound in chains, having great thirst, would fill himself with salt ? and yet all this folly consists in nothing, but not proportioning the means to their end. He who is dry ought to go to some fountain, and there quench his thirst ; and man, who desires to ease his heart, is to repair to God, and there he shall find rest. To divert himself after the creatures, and there to feed his pleasures, is no other than to eat salt, which increases his thirst and appetite, and scorches his entrails. We are fools, therefore, in not looking upon God in all our actions, and not ordering them to him, as to our end. He were to be esteemed a sot, who, being to light a lamp, would fill it with water instead of oil, and yet strive and trouble himself to make it burn. These follies we commit every day, when we use the creatures to other ends than the service of God : so as they can neither kindle in us the fire of his love, nor sustain the lustre and dignity of the reasonable soul. From all, then, which is said, it follows, that what is not adapted to its proper end, is contemptible, monstrous and unprofitable. For this reason David said, " All have declined," that is, all have wandered from their end, which is God, " and are made unprofitable." Man, therefore, whilst he serves not his Creator, is a thing vain, and stands for nothing ; and it were much better for him not to be, than not to order himself to his end. The laborer who has planted a tree,

to the end it should bring him fruit, if it yield none, plucks it up by the roots, and burns it; and in the gospel, the barren fig-tree was commanded to be cut down.

SECTION III.

This force of the final cause is such, that things ordering themselves to it, receive a better being, and a more noble estimation from their end, how mean soever, than from any thing they can attain, which is not their end, though never so precious. A spade receives its value from digging the earth, and for that end, is esteemed and bought by the laborer; but if you give it to a painter to limn with, he will not allow it a place in his shop. The sick man, whilst he is infirm, will pay any thing for a bitter medicine, which, being well, he hates. Even vessels for unclean offices, being placed in corners, are of use and sought for; but set upon a cupboard, are a scorn. So much it imports things to be accommodated to their proper end, which, how vile and base soever, gives them estimation; but severed from it, though they mount to the clouds, they lose their value. Mark, then, in what condition is that man, who seeks not after God, and addresses not his actions to him, who is so high an end. It is also to be considered, that as there is nothing so base, which, being applied to its proper end, has not some good; so there is nothing, how precious soever, which, being diverted from its end, loses not its worth. He who is ready to die for thirst, will esteem a little water out of a ditch, more than all the treasures of the world: so Lysimachus valued a jar of water above his kingdom. From whence it follows, that it is the end which gives things their value and estimation.

Open, then, thine eyes, and consider, that thou art not in the world for nothing; that thou wert not created without a wherefore, and for what; thou hast an end, and oughtest to pursue it, and if thou neglect it, thou art worse than when thou wert not. Thou hast an end, and the greatest and most high that can be thought of, which is the glory of God. Certainly, if God had only created thee to serve him, without hope to enjoy him or ever to attain to his glory, yet thou oughtest to have esteemed it highly. The queen of Saba (3. Reg. 10.), when she beheld the greatness, wisdom and majesty of king Solomon, cried out with wonder, "Blessed are thy servants, who stand here in thy presence." If this wise lady held it for a happiness to serve Solomon, what an honor and felicity is it to serve God! But that infinite goodness was not content, that thy end should be only to serve, but that thou shouldst pass so far as to enjoy him, and be partaker of his own blessedness. In this high end, thou art not only equal to angels, but a sharer with God, who, as he has no other end or blessedness but himself, so he would not that thou shouldst have a less end or happiness than thy Creator. Thou wert born, then,

for a great good, since thou wert born for the chief good. Whereupon the Master of Sentences says, "God created the rational creature that he might know the chief good, and, knowing and loving it, might possess it, and, possessing it, enjoy it." God created the elements for those creatures which have life; he created the herbs of the field for those creatures which have sense; those which have sense for man: and man for an end, which should surpass all; as being created, not for an end within nature, but for one above it, a supernatural and divine end. Know, therefore, how to esteem it; and, having received so great an honor, disgrace not thyself by stooping to things of a lower condition. Well said Dionysius Richelius (*De Novis*. 2. t. 56.): "Since the dignity of man is so great, who is created for so excellent an end, the felicity of angels, and the clear contemplation and fruition of his most glorious Creator; is it not a great ingratitude, baseness and folly of carnal and wicked men, to turn from their God, and not regarding so great happiness, to place their felicity in things carnal, transitory, vain, base and unclean, that is, in the delights of the flesh, the riches of the world, and in human praise and glory? For whosoever sins mortally, prefers the creature before the Creator, places his end in a thing frail and created, adhering more to that than his Maker, which must needs be a great injury to God, and a contempt of that felicity, for which he created us." Have this still before thine eyes, that thy end is greater than the world, since it is God who created the world. Consider, that by how much the honor is greater to be ordained for so excellent an end, by so much the ignominy is greater, to deflect from it. Know, therefore, thy own worth and dignity, and preserve it, and direct all thy works and actions to so glorious a mark; and since God has created thee for the same end with angels, live like an angel, and endeavor to fill up their seats, and to be a companion of their glory. It is a great privilege of human nature, that, being in substance inferior to that of angels, yet it may equal and excel it in happiness. For God, that the angels might attain their end, proportioned his grace conformable to their natures, giving more to the more perfect; but to men he gives his grace without this restriction; so that man, if he please, may be more than an angel.

The ancient philosophers knew very well the great importance of the end of man, and were, therefore, very solicitous in finding out what it was, that, having once found it, they might direct the actions of their life to it. For they said, and truly, that all they did was error, if first the end of man, whereto human actions might be addressed, were not known. And, therefore, Marcus Aurelius (*Antonin.* l. 2. *Philos.*) said in his philosophy, that they dote who propose not to themselves some mark, that they might address all their thoughts and endeavors. But they had once agreed, that the end of man was to live conformable to his nature, which many of them did not then do, to

actions, and obtain it; what excellent lessons and instructions did they leave us! And although the end of man, in their opinion, did not transcend human nature; yet the Stoics and Cynics forsook honors, wealth and pleasures, that they might the better accommodate their lives and actions to it; living not only without doing ill, but doing what they thought to be good, maintaining still, that we ought in all things to conform ourselves to virtue; and all this for that natural end, which they had found out; concerning which Philo (Philo de Mig. Abrah.) speaks these words: "The end, so celebrated by the most excellent philosophers, is to live according to nature; and this is done, when the soul, entering by the way of virtue, walks in the paths of right reason, and follows God, ever mindful of his commandments, and observing them with firmness, in all his words and actions." If man, then, ought to do this, in order to his natural end, what ought he to do, in order to his supernatural, and to eternity? Antoninus, the philosopher, judging that the end of man was to live according to nature, thought it a great madness, not to conform himself to the accidents of life, and bear them with calmness and equality of mind; insomuch that he said, to do otherwise was the plague-sore and imposthume of the world. What would he have said of committing grievous and deadly sins, which separate us from God, who is above all nature, and the Author of it? He was so solicitous in ordering himself to this end, that, from morning until night, all his thoughts were busied in the contemplation of the end whereto he was born, and in fitting his actions to comply with it. Whereupon, he gives us this advice (Anton. l. 5. in prin.): "In the morning, when thou risest, and findest thyself oppressed with sleep and sloth, have this thought ever in readiness, that thou risest to exercise the actions of a man, and shalt, therefore, say to thyself, 'Whence comes it, that thou so sluggishly goest about that for which thou wert born, and for which thou camest into the world? Wert thou perhaps born to pamper thyself in a soft and warm bed? This, indeed, is pleasing; but wert thou born for thy delight and pleasure, and not for labor? Seest thou not how plants, spiders, ants, bees, and all things, employ themselves in their proper duties; and thou only refusest to exercise the office of a reasonable man, in what appertains to thy nature? I confess some refreshment is necessary; but in this, nature has prescribed a rule, as in eating and drinking; but thou in this passest what is sufficient, and in what thou oughtest to do, fallest short, and reachest not to reason. This happens, because thou dost not love thyself; for if thou didst, thou wouldst comply with thy nature and her commands. Those craftsmen, who love and take pleasure in their arts, employ themselves so seriously in them, that they neither think of bathing nor feeding; but thou prizest not thy nature so much, as a turner or comedian doth his trade,

or a covetous man his gold, or an ambitious man his vain glory. For these, that they may attain to what they aim, forget both food and sleep; but thou esteemest the actions, proper to a reasonable soul, unworthy of labor or solicitude.' " All this is from that wise emperor, who, from the consideration of his end and nature, animated himself to comply with his duty and obligation.

SECTION IV.

From what is spoken, we are to gather the estimation we are to have of the eternal, and with what earnestness we are to desire and seek it, since it is the end for which we were only born; and that for itself we are not so much as to look at the temporal, as not being at all ordained for it. But that we may likewise see what use we are to make of it, and the difference arising between it and the eternal, the one being our end, and the other at best but our means to obtain it, as we have already declared the nature of the eternal, so we will, with as much brevity as possible, explicate the nature of the temporal, which, as a medium, has no other reason to be loved or valued by us, but as it conduces to our chief end, which is God and his glory. For as a soldier, when he is in health, values not the physician and his medicines, because they avail him not to the conquering of his enemy; and when he is sick or hurt, cares not to put on his arms, because they conduce not to the recovery of his health; in the like manner, we are to keep our hearts and wills free, and disinterested from any thing, but that which leads to our end and salvation. The traveller, who is fixed in his resolution of arriving to some certain place, if he meet with two or three several ways, desires not this more than that, but only inasmuch as this may more readily bring him to his rest: he cares not whether it be plain or hilly, whether it lead to the right hand or to the left; all is indifferent, so it bring him whither he intends. After the like manner we are to behave ourselves in the use of things temporal. We are neither to love the goods of this world, nor fear the evils of it; but, free from both, make only choice of that which leads to our salvation. If poverty bring thee to God, embrace it with both arms and esteem it; if riches and greatness withdraw thee from him, trample them under foot, despise and cast them from thee, as if they were poison; if disgraces and neglect of men assist thee to gain heaven, rejoice in thy affronts; if honors make thee forget thy Creator, abhor them as death; if pleasures distract thee from him, to whom thou owest so much, deprive thyself of the contents of this life, that thou mayst not lose those of the other; and if grief or torments make thee know thy Redeemer, receive them with all submission and willingness. Wherefore, thou art neither to desire nor abhor good or evil in this life, but inasmuch as it unites or separates thee from God, who is thy true and only end. This indifference was well known to David,

as he is explained by St. Austin, in that psalm, which he entitles and dedicates "To the end," where he considers himself as created by God for so high an end, as to serve and enjoy him. Upon which supposition, he utters this sentence: "As is his darkness, so is his light;" because we are no more to incline our affections to the lustre and splendor of this life, than to the obscurity, ignominy and afflictions; no more to the light and prosperity, than to the darkness and adversity of it; and, therefore, the holy father speaks in this manner: "In this night, in this mortality of human life, men enjoy both light and darkness. Light is prosperity, and darkness adversity. But when Christ, our Saviour, shall come and inhabit the soul by faith, and shall promise another light, and shall inspire and endow man with patience, and shall so move him, as not to be delighted with prosperity, nor dejected with adversity, the faithful man shall then begin to use this world with indifference, and shall not be puffed up, when things succeed happily, nor broken and dejected, when they fall out crossly, but shall bless God in all conditions; whether he abound, or want, whether he be sick, or in health; and shall be ever ready to sing this song: 'I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall be ever in my mouth.'"

Another condition of the medium, which is either the same that we have spoken of, or united to it, is, that we are not to enjoy the medium, but only to use it; for, in enjoying, the soul rests and contents itself, which is proper to the end; but in the use, it aims at the attaining something further, which is proper to the medium. We are, therefore, not to seek after any creature, but inasmuch as it may be a means to conduce to our end, which is the Creator; and he who seeks after things temporal for themselves, does no less an injury to God, than to change basely his end, leaving the eternal for the temporal, and the Creator for the creature, and becomes so much a sot and a fool, as he mistakes his true end, and makes the medium his end, and submits himself to a vile creature. From whence may be understood that difference between things, which is noted by St. Austin and divines, that some things are to be enjoyed, and others only made use of. We are only to enjoy the eternal, and use the temporal only so far as may help to save us, and no further. For, as the same saint says, the vicious life of man is no other, than that which he uses ill, and that which he enjoys ill; and, on the contrary, the holy and laudable life of the good is that which uses this world aright, and enjoys God aright. From hence also may be resolved that doubt amongst the ancient philosophers, which are the true goods. Which controversy was also on foot amongst the faithful in David's time. Wherefore, he demands, in one of his psalms, "Who will show us the good things?" This doubt is resolved, and an answer is given to the question; that those are the goods which unite us to God, and those the

only evil, which separate us from him. Whereupon St. Austin (Aug. in Psalm. 138.) says, "We now know no other evil, than to offend God, and not to obtain what he has promised; neither know we other good, than to please him, and attain to what he has promised. What have we, then, to say to the goods and evils of this life, but to be indifferent to either? because being now drawn forth from the womb of our mother, Babylon, esteeming them as indifferent, we say, 'Such is his darkness as is his light;' neither does the prosperity of this life make us happy, nor the adversity miserable." Socrates said, that the chief wisdom was to distinguish good from evil; and Seneca knew no better rule to distinguish them, than by their end; and, therefore, says, "When thou wouldst know what thou hast to desire, and what to fly, look upon the chief good, and the end of thy whole life;" for to that, all which we do is to relate; and so, according to what we have said, concludes that only to be good, which is virtuous, and all other goods false and adulterate. Thou art eternally to enjoy thy Creator. Content thyself with this hope, and place not thy joy in the creature, which is only lawful for thee to use.

SECTION V.

But we are much to consider, that the most excellent use of the creatures, for the attaining to the Creator, is the contempt of them. God would have it so easy for thee to obtain thy end, that thou couldst not miss the means, since even the want of all things may further thee. Let no man, therefore, complain of the necessities of life, since, though all things fail him, the means of his salvation will not fail him; for even that want may be a means to obtain it. If thou shalt, therefore, fall into such a poverty, as thou shalt have nothing to sustain thee, if it conduce to thy salvation, think thyself the happiest man in the world, and embrace it with a hundred hands; for as all things which hinder us from our end are to be contemned, so whatsoever helps us to the obtaining of it (although it be grief, pain or death itself), is to be esteemed above all value. So great a matter it is to be a means of thy salvation, that Christ, our Lord, who is the beginning and end of all things, disdained it not himself; incarnating, dying and remaining, for that end, in the most blessed sacrament of his body and blood. And if it cost the Son of God so dear to be a means of thy salvation, do not thou stick at any thing (how horrible soever it appear to human nature) that may advance and secure it, but esteem it as a paradise, though it be infamy, shame or dishonor.

Thou travellest towards heaven; that is the end of thy journey. Make thy voyage secure, whatsoever it cost thee. He who goes for the Indies, if he may embark in a strong and well-rigged vessel, will not make choice of that which is rotten and worm-eaten. Take the most certain way for heaven; and, believe me,

there is none more ready, than that of the cross of Christ, his humility and mortification. In all things, thou desirest still the best for thyself; know, there is nothing better, or more imports thee, than a good life. Make it, then, a good one; and content not thyself with this which thou now livest, if thou canst make it better; and there is no way more ready and available to improve it, than by imitating the life of thy Redcemer, to despise all that is temporal. This is the most proper and certain way of obtaining the eternal, whereto thou art to aspire, and for which thou wert born. Have still thy end before thine eyes; for thou errest so often as thou dost not behold it, and canst not err without great danger. Many compare this life to a high and narrow bridge, so narrow, that it is scarce broad enough for our feet; and if we fall, we are precipitated into a filthy lake, where serpents and dragons wait to devour us. And who, being to pass such a bridge in an obscure and dark night, having no other guide to direct him but a little light place in the end of the bridge, durst for one instant remove his eyes from it? In the like condition are we. This life is a straight bridge, over which we are to pass, in the night and darkness of this world. We cannot come off safely in this dangerous passage, without still looking at our end, and at that divine light which enlightens our souls. Let not our eyes wander from it, lest we fall into that gulf, and perish for all eternity. This perdition David signified in the title which he gave to his 13th Psalm, which he calls "For the end," where he says, that those who look not upon God as their utmost end, making no more account of him, than if he were not; that such became abominable and corrupted in their intentions; that there was not one amongst them who did well; that all became vain and unprofitable, and failed in their thoughts, words and actions; that their mouths were as pestilential as an open sepulchre, which none could endure for the stench of worms and corruption; that the poison of asps was in their lips, and deceit and bitterness in their mouths; that all their ways were wickedness, and that, therefore, their feet ran swiftly to shed blood; that their hearts were full of fearful imaginations, and that they trembled where there was nothing to fear: finally, that all their courses were nothing but ruin and unhappiness; that they did not invoke and pray to the Lord; that they knew not the ways of peace; that the fear of God was not before their eyes. All this, which David deciphers, happened, as he says, to this wicked people, because they had not God in their hearts, nor did propose him as the end of their actions. And truly, from this defect springs all that is evil. For without God there is neither quiet, peace nor virtue; for true peace consists in seeking nothing but God, and for God. In this consist the liberty of the sons of God, the contempt of the world, the tranquillity of the mind, and the conformity with the will of

God. And, most certainly, the foundation of all virtue is to know that we are born for nothing but the service of God ; and to forget it, as the wicked do, is (as David says) a certain kind of atheism, making us live, as if there were no God, in looseness of manners, without prayer, and without the quiet and repose of the soul. To these three heads, the prophet reduces the disorders of those who think not of their chief end, nor remember that there is a God. And, therefore, he who, on the contrary, shall still fix his thoughts upon that whereto he is ordained, shall be endued with virtuous habits, fervor and frequency of prayer, and possess quiet and peace of mind. For, as the iron touched by the loadstone rests not until it respect the north, no more shall a heart ever enjoy repose, but in beholding its chief and last end, which is God.

CHAPTER II.

By the Knowledge of ourselves may be known the Use of Things Temporal, and the little Esteem we are to make of them.

BEFORE we pass further, I will here advertise you of a point of great importance, which is, that for the right use of things, the knowledge of the things themselves, and the end whereto they serve, is not sufficient ; but there is required also a knowledge of the person who is to use them. It is not enough for the wise physician to know the use and property of his medicaments, unless he know the nature and quality of his patient, his temper, strength, age, and other circumstances, that according to them he may administer his remedies. And, therefore, having shown the end of man to be eternal, and that the things of this world are only to be used as means to obtain it, we shall now, for the completing of this matter, speak something of the state and quality of man, as he now is, that he may thereby know what use of things temporal is most convenient for him.

Human nature is, at the present, in a far different condition from that wherein it was, when God at first created man, and placed him in paradise : so that a far different use of things temporal from that which was then lawful and convenient, is now to be required. And, therefore, it is fit, that we know what man is, that we may ascertain the use of man, and the things of man, which cannot be done without the knowledge of what he is in general, and, also, that every one know what he himself is in particular. And, therefore, Dion Chrysostom (Dion Chrys. Orat. 10.) says, " He who knows not man, cannot make use of man ; and he who knows not himself, cannot make use of himself, nor of those things which belong to his nature." But who can arrive to the knowledge of himself ? It is so difficult, that the devil, although he knew how important this knowledge was to man, and wished nothing but his ruin and perdition, yet confident in

the impossibility of attaining it, and desirous to gain the credit of a wise god among the Grecians, he caused this command, *Know thyself*, to be placed in his temple of Apollo, in Delphi. And truly, the light of heaven is necessary for this knowledge; and we, guided by what faith dictates, and the saints instruct us, will endeavor to say something, whereby we may, at least, be less ignorant of what we are. It is then to be considered, what man is of himself, and what he is of God; that is, what he has of himself, and what he has received from God. What he has from God, must needs be good, since he gave it, from whom can proceed no ill. And if upon this score, because it is good, he has less ground to humble himself, I am sure he has none to boast of, since it is wholly the divine benefit, not having any thing of himself, but what he has received. Only he may consider, that, by the sin of Adam, he has put himself in a worse condition, both for soul and body, than when he received them from God. His soul is now full of ignorance and imbecility for what is good, and subject to a thousand miseries, which it then had not; and his body, which is now mortal, was then immortal, and free from the corruption of those infirmities which (as has been already said) accompany it, until it end in dust, worms and ashes. But these, although, by the perverseness of our nature, they are become much worse, yet, coming from God, are good, and are an honor and glory, in respect of what he possesses from himself.

This the Arausican council declares in two words, that is, We are nothing of ourselves but a lie and sin; that is the nothing that we are, and the evil we are. A lie we are; because what is a lie, is not; and from ourselves, we have only a not-being; for what have we but what God has given us? Take away what we have received, and there remains nothing. This is what is ours; what is more, is our Creator's; and, therefore, we are not to use it according to our own fancy, but his pleasure. Thou art also to consider, that thou oughtest to humble thyself more for being nothing, than for being but dust and ashes. For those are something; and between something and nothing there is no proportion, and, as the philosophers say, an infinite distance. Thou hast not from thyself so much as a possibility of being; for if God were not God, thou couldst not have being at all. From this consideration, thou hast great reason to humble thyself. For to be nothing is a well without bottom, never to be drawn dry; yet this nothing is far better than what thou art by sin. Here the most holy saints have sunk down in amazement, and some, to whom our Lord has revealed what they are, have been so astonished, as they had certainly died, if they had not been comforted and upheld by the divine hand. For, having sinned, thou art as evil as sin itself. Call to mind what we have said of the infinite malice and abomination of sin. All this falls upon him who commits it. With reason, therefore, did Dion, the philosopher, say,

that it was most hard to know one's self; because it was most hard to comprehend the malice of sin, which, being the chief evil, becomes in a manner as difficult to be known as the chief good; and, therefore, no better way to find what it is, than to proceed after the same way we do in the knowledge of God.

SECTION II.

St. Dionysius Areopagita teaches us, that in the knowledge of God we may proceed after two manners: either by the way of affirmation, attributing to God all that is good and perfect; or by way of negation, denying to him all that is good or perfect in the creatures, as being of a goodness and perfection infinitely above it. In the same manner we are to proceed in the knowledge of sin, either by affirmation, in attributing to it all the ill in all creatures whatsoever; or by negation, denying it any ill, as being a malice of another kind, horrible and enormous, above all other evils imaginable. Call together, therefore, all the evils thou hast seen, heard or read of; join all these in one; a mortal sin is worse than all these together. The miseries of Job, the pestilence in the time of David, the torments of Phalaris, Nero, Dioclesian, and all the tyrants, are far short of it in malice. It is as bad as all those afflictions and miseries, which they suffered, who perished in the deluge, and those who were burned alive in Sodom, and the neighboring towns, and as all they suffered, who were put to the sword in Amalec, and all those who perished by famine in the siege of Jerusalem. One only mortal sin goes far beyond all the aforesaid miseries. All the plagues, wars, sickness, famines, all that has been suffered since the world began, come not near the ill of one sin. Good God! how vast is that evil, which is equivalent to so many evils! where shall we find an evil that may equal it? where shall we meet with an end of so much malice? Certainly, all the evils that have been since the world began, or could succeed in a million of worlds to come, fall short of it. If nothing, then, upon earth be comparable to it, let us seek it beneath the earth amongst those eternal evils which shall never have end. Let us enter hell, and consider the torments there, which are or have been suffered by men or devils, even from the least and most unknown of the damned, to Lucifer and Antichrist. Is there any thing there that may equal the evil of one sin? No, we shall not there find it. Reflect, I say again, and mark, if thou findest any torment amongst so many miserable creatures as suffer in hell, which may parallel the malice of one only mortal sin. There is none to be found. But I will give thee leave to make a collection of those many torments which may seem to thee, in reason, comparable to a mortal sin, and you shall find, that sin does not only equalize, but exceed the malice of them. Join then together, and put in one heap, all the torments that are inflicted upon all damned creatures, men and angels, and compare the malice of

them all with that of one mortal sin, and you shall find, that the malice of sin does far surpass the malice of all those. That gnashing of teeth, that inconsolable weeping, that burning fire, which penetrates the bowels for all eternity, all that our imagination can frame, reaches not so immense an evil. If we cannot, therefore, find the depth of the malice of sin by way of affirmation, let us try what may be done by the other way of negation. But this will also fail us. For the evil of plagues, famine and death are not it; a mortal sin is more than these. The evils of poverty, dishonor and torments are not it; it is more than these. The torments of hell are not it; it is above hell, and all the pains of it. Think with thyself, that all the atoms which are to be found in the air, all the sands in the sea, all the leaves on the trees, all the grass in the fields, all the stars in the heavens; think, I say, that they are foul and ugly bodies, all most deformed monsters, and frame to thyself a monster and ugly creature, which should be made of all these; will this equalize the foulness of a mortal sin? It is not this ugly monster, nor this foul deformed creature; but it is a foulness and ugliness, that does far surpass all these, and all horrid shapes and figures imaginable. And let not this seem strange to thee; for not only the evil of a mortal sin, but even that of a venial, is greater than all the evils of hell, or the evils within or without it; all the monstrosity, all the deformity of all things, that are or can be contracted into one, do not equal it; sin is more than all. And, therefore, as St. Dionysius said of God, that he was above what was good, or what was fair, because his goodness and beauty were of a superior kind; so it may be said of sin, it is neither deformity, abomination, horror or malice, but it is something more than all these.

Let a sinner, therefore, know himself, and that he is by sin above all that is ugly, foul or monstrous. For as he that has whiteness, is as white as that which makes him so; so he that is in sin, is as horrible and ill as sin itself. Let him then reflect, whither he is to sink, charged with such a guilt, and how much he ought to abhor and loathe himself. Certainly, if he should sink into hell, he would there find no torment worse than himself. If he should return into the abyss of nothing, he would be there better than in that abyss of malice, which is in sin. Let him then reflect, whether so unworthy and vile a wretch ought to have the same use of the creatures, as if he were in the state of innocence, and without this blemish of sin. Let him consider, if a person so infamous, so abominable, as himself, ought to use the things of this world for his delight, honor, pomp and ostentation. The emperor Marcus Aurelius, lord of the world, and possessor of the greatest honors it could give him, though a gentile, yet thought himself so worthy of contempt, that he writes in this manner: "Treat thyself, O soul! with ignominy, and despise thyself;" for thou hast no title to honor. It is a prodigious thing, that he,

who has committed a mortal sin, should desire honor and respect ; that he should complain of the troubles of this life, and desire to be cherished and made much of ; that he who is the shame and infamy of the world, should gape after glory ; that he who is a traitor to his God, should wish to be honored and respected. He who has deserved hell for an eternity, why should he grumble at a short sickness, or the necessities of this life, which, if he make the right use of them, may serve as a means of his salvation ? Let him, therefore, who has sinned, know, that he is not to make the same use of the creatures, as if he were innocent ; he is not to aim at other honor, than that of God ; he is not to seek after ease, and the commodities of life, but the security of his salvation ; not to thirst after the pleasures of the world, but to perform strict penances for his sins past. O ! if one knew himself perfectly, with what different eyes would he behold the things of the world ! He would look upon them as things not appertaining to him at all ; and if he did not despise them, at least he would make no account of them. The Son of God, only because he took upon him the form of a sinner, would not use the goods of this life, but rather embraced all that was troublesome, painful and bitter in it. Why should he, then, who is really and in substance a sinner, seek honors and delights ? Let him know the means of his salvation, since Christ himself has taught them, to wit, penance, mortification, and the cross. If Christ, because he bore the sins of others, used not temporal goods and the commodities of life, why should man, who is loaden with his own sins, complain he wants the pleasures and conveniences of it ? Why should he gape after the goods of the earth, who is infected with a greater evil than that of hell ? The admirable man, blessed Francis Borgia, the great despiser of himself and the world, out of this consideration, was most content in the tribulations and want of all things temporal ; and the least comfort in his greatest necessities seemed too much for him. All men wondered to see him so poor, and the incommodities he suffered in his travels, when he visited the colleges of the Society in Spain. Amongst the rest, a certain gentleman, amazed at his great pains and sufferance, said to him, " Father, how is it possible, that, having been so great a lord, you can endure the troubles and inconveniencies of the ways ? " To whom the servant of God answered, " Sir, do not pity me ; for I always send before me a harbinger, who provides plentifully for all things necessary. " This harbinger was the knowledge of himself, which, in his greatest necessities, made what he had appear too plentiful.

SECTION III.

Besides this, he who has sinned ought to consider, that he has need of God's holy hand to draw him out of that misery, or, if he be already by repentance freed, to preserve him from falling again

into it; that the means to obtain this, is not the pride of the world, the riches of the earth, or the pleasures of the flesh; but fasting, sackcloth, humiliation and penance. Let him remember, that of himself he is nothing, and to that nothing has added sin; that being nothing, he can do nothing that is good; and that by sin he has disobliged him, who only could assist him in doing good. Man is of himself nothing but a lie, and sin; two horrid and profound abysses. Let him imitate David, who said, "I cried unto thee, O Lord, from the depths:" what other depths, than those two of nothing and of sin, which have no bottom? Let him, then, who has once offended his Creator, know himself, and where he remains. Let him pray, sigh and cry from his nothing, and from the depth of his misery, that he may be heard by his God. And certainly, for him, who is in the condition of a penitent, and to demand mercy, it is not seemly to use superfluities, to employ himself in vanities, to take delight in the world, enjoy the creatures, and seek after greatness. And although it were lawful in the integrity of nature, when man was free from the corruption of sin, to use the creatures with more liberty; yet, being now fallen, it is no ways tolerable; but let him look upon himself as one guilty, who has offended his God, and is, in fine, a miserable man.

The philosophers, who considered nature, not as it was by sin, but as it ought to be in itself, measured their virtues by that rule, and, therefore, knew not the virtue of humility, nor used that of penance; and the virtues of magnanimity, constancy and magnificence they extended so far, that many actions, which the Stoics and Peripatetics called virtuous, may be esteemed vicious. But the horribleness of sin and the weakness of human nature being now discovered, the state of things is changed, and humility ought still to reign both in our souls and bodies; and many acts of other virtues, esteemed by them, are to be corrected. We are to choose different mediums for the advancing our end, from those of the philosophers; both because the ends we aim at are not the same, and because we know ourselves to be in a far other condition than they imagined. The end, proposed by the philosophers, was merely natural, to wit, the happiness and felicity of this life. The state of human nature they conceived to be free and uncontaminated by sin, and that it had sufficient force of itself to do good. In all this they were deceived; and it is not, therefore, strange, if, for their obtaining of their ends, they taught ways distinct from those of Christians, who knew their end to be supernatural, to wit, the happiness not of this, but of the other life; who know also their state of nature not to be free and entire, as it was at first, but corrupted and defaced by sin, and that of itself it has neither force nor efficacy to execute any thing that is good, unless assisted by the grace and mercy of God. It is therefore no marvel, if Christians, who know themselves, their

end and condition, make use of such virtues and mediums as the philosophers knew not. Neither is it much, that the philosophers took some virtuous acts for vices, since they mistook many vices for virtues. Aristotle, the prince of natural and moral philosophers, knew not humility, voluntary poverty and penance to be virtues, but rather condemned the last to be a kind of insensibility, and one of those vices contrary to the virtue of temperance. The Stoics also held pity and commiseration for a vice. But since the gospel of Christ, these are become the most necessary and recommended virtues, and the most apt and ready means for obtaining our salvation. These three virtues, in which consists the contempt of all things temporal, Aristotle knew not, because he knew not himself. By humility honors are despised, by poverty riches, and by penance the pleasures and amusements of the world. And, therefore, he who will make the right and profitable use of things temporal, for the gaining of eternity, must, as a sinner, humble himself, and do penance; must not employ himself, and the time of his life, in gathering and heaping up riches, which are so far from being goods, that to innumerable persons they have shut up the gates of the true and real goods, which are only the eternal, to which we are wholly to aspire, not trusting in our own forces, but in the mercy and passion of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER III.

The Value of Goods Eternal is made apparent to us by the Incarnation of the Son of God.

BUT above all that has been said, the incomparable difference between things temporal and eternal, is made most apparent to us by the incarnation and passion of Jesus Christ. The gaining of eternity is a matter of so high concernment, that the Son of God, to the end we might obtain it, was incarnate and made man; and that we might despise things temporal, is also of so great importance, that for it, it was convenient that Christ, our Redeemer, should suffer and die. I know not what can raise in us a higher conception of the greatness of the one, and baseness of the other, than these high and stupendous acts of God Almighty. And, therefore, though briefly, we will say something of them both, beginning with that admirable and great mystery of the incarnation.

Great is all that which is eternal, and so much imports us, that, rather than we should lose it, God wrought a work of that height and love, as amazed the angels; in which we will consider four things: The greatness of the work, the manner of putting it in execution, the evils from which it frees us, and the good we gain by it. For the first, which is the greatness of the work, we are to suppose the state of man, as he then stood; which was the most

miserable, infamous and wretched condition that could be imagined. He was become a slave to the devil, polluted with sin, condemned to eternal punishment, an enemy to God, and without hope of remedy. For even the highest seraphims could not imagine, that without prejudice to the justice of God, it was possible for man to be redeemed from that miserable and ignominious state. For although all the men in the world should suffer a thousand deaths, and all the orders of holy angels in heaven should offer themselves in sacrifice, and should suffer eternal torments in hell, all would not satisfy for one mortal sin. All created remedies were, then, impossible; and although God should have created some more excellent and holy creature than the most high seraphims, yet that, and they, were insufficient to appease the divine justice, incensed against man. What remedy, then, where none was to be had? What hope, when all was despair? Certainly, from what was or could be created, it was impossible; and from the Creator it was not known to be possible; and if it was known to be possible, who could hope, that the offended party should satisfy for the offence committed against himself? that the creditor should pay what the debtor owed? What hope, then, of remedy, when all hope failed, both from heaven and earth? The only remedy, and that only known to God, was, that God, without prejudice to his justice, might cover man with his mercy; but that much to the cost of God himself, and the greatest work, whereto his power and wisdom could extend. But who could think he would employ so great a work for his enemy? that he would set up the rest of his omnipotency for him, who was a traitor to his Lord? Only this way remained, for God to make himself man, the most great and stupendous work possible or imaginable. But who could believe this should be done for man, so vile a creature, made of a little earth, and of so small importance to God? This was a work to be reserved for God himself, if his own divinity, life or salvation (if it were possible) should come in question: let it be lawful to speak in this manner, to express, in some sort, that which is inexplicable, and to set forth this ineffable mystery, and the incomprehensible goodness of God. But to do this for the life of a traitor, for the salvation of a faith-breaker, to advance an enemy, who could once hope or dare to imagine it? If a man, for the service of God, had, as a faithful servant, hazarded his person, and run himself into that miserable and sad condition, it might have been presumed, that God, out of his goodness and acknowledgment, would have stretched his power for his freedom: but that man, having robbed God of his honor, contemned him, and made himself equal to him, and that God should yet, after all this, humble himself for him, debase himself so low as to be made man, and that for his enemy, who could think it? But such is the goodness of God, that he overcame our

hopes with his benefits, and did that for us, which would have only sufficed for himself; and for himself he could have done no more. O most stupendous love of God! O most immense charity of our Creator, who so much loved man, that he stuck not to do what he could for him! O ineffable goodness, which would discharge that debt which his enemy owed! O divine nobleness, that would, so much to his own cost, do good to man, from whom he had received so much evil! To redeem man, though it had cost him nothing, had been much; but at so great a rate, who could imagine it? But the thoughts of God are far different from those of men.

SECTION II.

Let us now look upon the greatness of this work; great after divers manners: great by the humbling of God so much below himself; great in itself, so great, that the omnipotent power of God could work no greater. Here the divine attributes were exhausted. For, as St. Austin says, neither God could do a greater work, nor knew how to determine it better; there was found the bottom of the whole omnipotency of God; for a greater work than this was neither possible nor imaginable. For, as nothing greater than God is possible, so no work can possibly be greater than that, whereby man is made God. See, then, what thou owest him for this excess of favor, that, being his enemy, he did all for thee that his omnipotency could, that his wisdom knew, or his divine goodness and love could will. All these attributes thy Creator employed for thy good; employ thou all thy powers in his service. God did all he could for thee; do thou all thou canst for him. He wrought the work of thy redemption with all his forces and omnipotency; do thou, then, with all thy power and forces, observe his divine will and pleasure, loving and serving him in all things. Seest thou not here his infinite love and goodness, made apparent and laid down before thine eyes? Dost thou yet hesitate to love him with all thy powers and faculties, who loved thee with all his omnipotency? See what a love was this, when he did that for thee, being his enemy, greater than which he could not do for his friend; nor for himself, if his own glory were at stake. Seest thou not clearly his infinite goodness, that overcame so infinite a malice, man not being able to do a work against God of so stupendous wickedness, but God would do a work for man of a more stupendous goodness, not suffering his divine goodness to be overcome by human malice. God saw that man did a work so profoundly evil, that there could not possibly be a worse; for nothing can be so bad as a mortal sin. He, therefore, determined to do a work so infinitely good, that in goodness it was impossible to be a better; and this for accursed thee. What sayest thou to it? What sayest thou to such an overflowing bounty, to such an excess of love? Hear what the

apostle says (Ad Roman. 11.): "If thy enemy be a-hungred, feed him; if he be thirsty, give him to drink; so shalt thou heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good." This did the Creator fully perform with thee, although his enemy. Yield thyself, then, vanquished, and blush, that thou lovest him not better than the angels. Thy state was not only necessitated by hunger and thirst, but thou wert plunged into eternal misery and want of all things that were good; deprived of glory and eternal happiness. If, then, to bestow a bit of bread, or a cup of water upon a necessitated enemy, be sufficient to call color into his face, and are as coals to inflame him in love and charity, what is it for God to have communicated his divinity to man, and to have given his life for him, when he was his enemy? How comes not this to make us blush for shame, and set us on fire in his divine love? These benefits are not to be coals, but flames, which ought to kindle in us the fire of true love and charity. Give thyself, then, for overcome, and love that divine goodness, which for thee, being the worst of all his creatures, did the best work of his omnipotency. O nobleness of God Almighty! O divine sense of honor!—that I may so speak:—man had overcome all works good or bad in malice; but such was the immense goodness of God, that he would not suffer man to do a work so excessive in evil, but he would do a work for the salvation of traitorous and false men, more excessive in good. Wherefore, O Lord! didst thou not this, when the angels sinned, who were better than man? What goodness is this, that thou sufferest so foul a sinner? Is it, perhaps, that thy work might appear the greater? Wouldst thou expect until man had first set up his rest in impudence and malice, that thou mightst then set up thy rest in mercy and goodness? Who sees not here, O Lord! the infiniteness of thy love, and the immenseness of thy bounty?

After all manners, this excellent work proclaims thy excess of bounty, because it is after all manners infinitely good, and opens as many parts to the understanding of our souls to adore and admire thee. For this work is not only infinitely good in substance, but in each particular circumstance. In itself it is infinitely good; for no work can be better, than that which makes man so good, as it makes him God. It is good, because by it the divinity is communicated to a creature, and, which is more, to the lowest and most vile of those who are capable of reason. For as it is the property of what is good to be communicative, so here we see the infinite goodness of God, who wholly, and all that he is, issues forth of himself, and is communicated to man. Who is not amazed, that the same divinity, which the eternal Father communicates to the eternal Word, who is God, as he is, should, after an admirable manner, be communicated to human nature, which was an enemy to him? O sea of divine goodness, that thus pourest forth thyself to do good, without regarding to whom! O

ocean of bounty, that thus overflowed in benefits even towards thy enemies! This work is likewise infinitely good, because with goodness it overcomes an infinite malice, and frees him who was so evil, that he deserved an infinite punishment. It is infinitely good, because it sets forth God with an infinite desire to pardon, and do good even to the greatest traitor, and who least deserved it. It shows him also infinitely good and complete in all virtue and perfection, that, rather than to fail the least jot in his justice, he would take upon him that which was due to a most unjust and accursed offender, and humbled himself to death, that he, who was condemned to die, should not perish eternally. I know not any thing, that can set forth God, as a more exact and perfect pattern of all virtue, than a work of so much justice and mercy. Who would not be amazed at the goodness and piety of a great emperor, who, having a desire to pardon a notorious traitor, should, rather than abate one jot of his inflexible justice, take upon him the habit and shape of that traitor, and die publicly in the market-place, that the offender might be spared? This did God, taking upon him the form of a servant, and dying upon the cross, to free condemned man from eternal death. O God, every way most perfect and good, who art so scrupulous in thy justice, and so indulgent in thy mercy; rigorous with thyself, that thou mightst be merciful with us! O God, infinitely good, infinitely holy, infinitely exact, and perfect in all! Let the angels praise thee for all thy perfections, since all are transcendent and infinitely good.

SECTION III.

To this may be added the excellent manner, by which a work, every way so excellently good, was performed, and with what love and desire of thy benefit it was wrought. From whence could a work of so much goodness issue, but from a furnace of love in the divine breast? And if by the effect we may know the cause, that love, which made God resolve upon a work so admirably strange and high, could not be other than immense in itself; for since the work was infinitely good, it could not proceed but from an infinite love; nor that love but from an infinite being. Besides this, it was a great prerogative and honor to human nature, that God should rather make himself a man than an angel. With being an angel, he might have freed man, and honored the angels, communicated his divine goodness to the creatures, and done a work of infinite bounty and favor. This, notwithstanding he was so passionate a lover of man, and (if I may so say) so fond of human nature, that he would not only oblige man by redeeming him, but in the manner of his redemption; he would not only that man should be redeemed, but that he should be redeemed by a man, and so would not only give the remedy, but confer also the honor upon our nature. Neither was he content in honoring

man more than angels, but would redeem him, and not the angels. This was a demonstration of his affection to man, beyond all expression, that not pardoning the angels, who were of a more excellent and supreme being than ours, he yet took pity of us, and not of them, and would do that for us which he did not for them. To this add, that when man sinned, and the whole stock of mankind was ruined, there remained no just man to commiserate and intercede for him. But when the angels fell, there remained thousands righteous, who might pity those of their own nature, and be sensible of their loss; and yet he would do this for man, and not for angels. The time, also, when this great work of mercy was put in execution, shows not a little the sweetness of God Almighty to our nature. It was in a time when mankind was most forgetful of God; when men strove to make themselves adored for gods, and those who could not attain to it themselves, adored other men worse than devils. Then did God think of making himself man, and for man, who would make himself God. This was a love indeed, to do most for us then, when we most offended him.

But let us see what good we received by this great work. Certainly, if we had received no good at all, it was much to free us from those evils, whereinto we were plunged; to deliver us from the ignominy of sin, from the slavery of the devil, and from the horror of hell. To free us from these evils, without any other benefit, might be held an infinite good. And though there had been no evils to be freed from, nor goods to be bestowed upon us, yet the honor which our nature received, in having God to become one of us, was an incomparable blessing. But joining to this honor, our deliverance from those horrid and desperate evils, what happiness may be compared to ours? Justin writes, that Alexander the Great, beholding Lysimachus wounded in the head, and that he lost much blood, took his diadem, and bound it about his temples to stop his bleeding. This was a great favor from so mighty a prince, as well in the care he took of him, as in the manner, taking the ensign of majesty from his own head, and giving it to his vassal. But Lysimachus had not injured Alexander; he had served him faithfully, and received that wound in his quarrel. Neither did Alexander give him his diadem for ever, but suffered him only to wear it upon that present occasion. But the mortal wound of sin was not received by man in defence of God, or in his quarrel, but in rebellion against him. Yet God vouchsafes to cure the traitor, honors him with his own diadem, which is his divinity, communicating it to him, not for a short space, and then to take it from him, but bestowing it upon him for all eternity. What a bounty is this to an enemy, that, in freeing him from such a misery, crowns him with so great happiness?

But if to all this we shall add those other blessings, which he bestows upon us, giving us his grace, adopting us the sons of

God; and making us heirs of heaven, how infinitely will our obligations increase, since we are not only freed from so great evils, but enriched with unspeakable benefits, and our nature honored by his favors, above that of angels? All is marvellous, all is great, all is transcendent in this unspeakable goodness. The work itself is transcendent, the manner and love by which it was performed is transcendent. The evils from which it frees us are eternal; whose greatness, though it were not otherwise to be known, might in this sufficiently appear, that to free us from so many evils, and crown us with so many goods, it was necessary that he, who was eternal, should make himself temporal, and should execute this great and stupendous work so much to his own loss.

CHAPTER IV.

The Baseness of Temporal Goods may likewise appear by the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ.

THE greatness of eternal goods and evils is, by the incarnation of the Son of God, made more apparent to us than the sunbeams; since, for the freeing us from the one, and gaining for us the other, it was necessary so great a work should be performed, and that God judged not his whole omnipotency ill employed, that man might gain eternity. Yet does not this great work so forcibly demonstrate to us the baseness of things temporal, and the contempt which is due to them, as the passion and death of the Son of God; which was another work of his love, another excess of his affection, another tenderness of our Creator, and a most high expression of his good-will towards us; wherein we shall see, how worthy to be despised are all the goods of the earth, since, to the end we might condemn them, the Son of God would not only deprive himself of them, but, on the contrary, embraced all the evils and incommodities this life was capable of. Behold, then, how the Saviour of the world disesteemed temporal things, since he calls the best of them, and those which men most covet, but thorns; and, on the contrary, that which the world most hates and abhors, he qualifies with the name of blessings, favoring so much the poor, who want all things, that he calls them blessed, and says, "Their's is the kingdom of heaven." And of the rich, who enjoy the goods of the earth, he says, "It is harder for them to enter into heaven, than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle." And to persuade us yet more, he not only in words, but in actions, chose the afflictions, and despised the prosperity of this life; and to that end would suffer in all things, as much as could be suffered: in honor, by being reputed infamous; in riches, by being despoiled of all, even to his proper garments; in his pleasures, by being a spectacle of sorrow, and afflicted in each particular part of his most sacred body. This

we ought to consider seriously, that we may imitate him in that contempt of all things temporal, which he principally expressed in his bitter death and passion. This he would have us still to keep in memory, as conducing much to our spiritual profit, as an example which he left us, and as a testimony of the love he bore us, leaving his life for us, and dying for us a public death, full of so many deaths and torments. Tigranes (Xenophon in *Cyrolib.* 3.), king of Armenia, together with his queen, being prisoners to Cyrus, and one day admitted to dine with him, Cyrus demanded of Tigranes, what he would give for the liberty of his wife; to whom Tigranes answered, that he would not only give his kingdom, but his life and blood. The woman, not long after, requited this expression of her husband. For being both restored to their former condition, one demanded of the queen, what she thought of the majesty and greatness of Cyrus; to whom she answered, "Certainly, I thought not on him, nor fixed my eyes on any but him who valued me so much, as he doubted not to give his life for my ransom." If this lady were so grateful, only for the expression of her husband's affections, that she looked upon nothing but him, and neither admired nor desired the greatness of the Persians; what ought the spouse of Christ to do, who not only sees the love and affection of the King of heaven, but his deeds; not his willingness to die, but his actual dying a most horrid and cruel death for her ransom and redemption? Certainly, she ought not to place her eyes or thoughts upon any thing, but Christ crucified for her. Sabinus also extols the loyalty and love of Ulysses to his wife Penelope, in regard that Circe and Calypso promising him immortality, upon condition that he should forget Penelope, and remain with them, he utterly refused it, not to be wanting to the love and affection he owed to his spouse, who did also repay it him with great love and affection. Let a soul consider, what great love and duty it owes to its Spouse, Jesus Christ, who, being immortal, did not only become mortal, but died also a most ignominious death. Let us consider, whether it be reasonable it should forget such an excessive love, and whether it be fit, it should ever be not remembering the same, and not thankful for all eternity, hazarding to lose the fruits of the passion of its Redeemer and Spouse, Jesus Christ. Upon this let thy soul meditate day and night, and the spiritual benefits, which she will reap from thence, will be innumerable. Albertus Magnus (*Lud. de Ponte*, P. 4. in *Introduc.*) used to say, that the soul profited more by one holy thought of the passion of Christ, than by reciting every day the whole psalter, by fasting all the year on bread and water, or chastising the body, even to the effusion of blood. One day, amongst others, when Christ appeared to St. Gertrude, to confirm her in that devotion she had to his passion, he said to her, "Behold, daughter, if in a few hours, which I hung upon the cross, I so ennobled it, that the whole

world has ever since had it in reverence, how shall I exalt that soul, in whose heart and memory I have continued many years?" Certainly, it cannot be expressed, what favor devout souls obtain from heaven, in thinking often upon God, and those pains, by which he gained for us eternal blessings, and taught us to despise things temporal and transitory.

But that we may yet reap more profit by the holy remembrance of our Saviour's passion, we are to consider, that Christ took upon him all our sins, and being to satisfy the Father for them, would do it by the way of suffering; for which it was convenient, that there should be a proportion between the greatness of his pains, and the greatness of our sins. And certainly, as our sins were without bound or limit, so the pains of his torments were above all comparison; showing us by the greatness of those injuries he received in his passion, the greatness of those injuries we did to God by our inordinate pleasures. We may also gather, by the greatness of those pains and torments, which were inflicted upon him by the Jews and executioners, the greatness of those which he inflicted upon himself; for certainly, those pains, which he took upon himself, were not inferior to those he received from others. But who can explicate the pains which our Saviour, wounded by the grief he conceived at our offences, took upon himself? For such is the malice of a mortal sin, that, if we did but know it as it is, our hearts would burst with grief, and we could not suffer it and live; and, therefore, many have been known to die suddenly by the violent apprehension of their sins. St. Vincentius Ferrerius (*Vincent. Serm. 6. post invocavit. Fra. Francisco. Diego, en la Hist. de la Prov. de Aragon, l. 2. c. 6.*) writes of a certain light woman, who going to a sermon decked and adorned in all finery, when she heard the preacher, with great zeal and fervor, set out the heinousness of the sin of dishonesty, she, with mere grief and compunction, fell dead in the place; and a voice was heard, declaring she was in heaven. The same St. Vincent being in Zamora, two condemned persons were led forth to be burned for their filthiness. The saint drawing near to them, so laid open the deformity of their sin, that they both died in grief in the way to execution. Another time, the same saint, hearing the confession of an incestuous person, so moved him to contrition, that he died at his feet. If, then, the grievousness of sin be so great, that the grief of it brings death upon those who truly apprehend it, what shall we think of the grief of Christ, who perfectly knew the heinousness of sin, and took upon him all the sins of the world, and grieved for every one of them, as if he himself had committed it? Who can declare or imagine the grievousness of his resentment, when he saw his Father (whose honor he desired and endeavored from his very bowels) to be injured after so many and so horrid manners? Grave divines affirm, (*Suar. in 3. p. to. 2. disput. 33. Sec. 2.*) that the grief, which Christ

suffered for the sins of men, was more vehement and intense than all other griefs, what objects soever they have, or can have by ordinary power; either in man or angels; which afflictions he suffered all his life; and, therefore, one of the psalms says, "He was in labors from his youth;" which another lection reads, "He was agonizing and exhaling his soul." It was a custom among the Jews, that hearing any to blaspheme or injure God, they tore their garments in sign of grief. What grief did, then, the Son of God endure for all the blasphemies and injuries committed by the whole world against his eternal Father! Certainly, he tore not his garments, but his body, and poured forth his sacred blood at a thousand fountains, before he subjected it to the power of his enemies, revenging the sins against his Father, upon his own person, and tormenting himself for our sins, before he was tormented by others. Such was the zeal of the glory of God, which burned in his breast, that he would not pardon himself, to the end he might obtain pardon for man. If the zeal of Phinees was so great, that beholding two persons committing a sin, he could not contain himself from revenging it even with their deaths; if that of Elias took away the lives of so many false prophets, and Moses purpled his hands in the blood of his people, causing so many thousands of them to be slain; what shall be the zeal of Christ at the sight of the sins of all the world! how vehement his desire, that God should be revenged! and since he would revenge them upon himself, what grief and anguish did he endure for the sins of the whole world! Certainly, no words can possibly express it. But not contented with those he gave himself; he would subject himself also, to those which he received from others, which certainly were no small ones, but such as were proportionable to his burning zeal, and, therefore, beyond utterance painful and severe. Yet those, though rigorous and great, were short of that interior grief, which he took upon himself; for those were inflicted by the rage and madness of the Jews, but these by his own zeal and charity; and, therefore, by how much his love was greater than the hatred and malice of his enemies, by so much greater was the grief of his heart than that of his senses, and than those pains which he suffered in his sacred body. But it is fit we should also often reflect upon the greatness of those which were more particularly suffered for our example, that we may thence learn to despise the goods of the earth, which we see charged with so many evils, and avoid all sorts of sins, since our sweet Saviour took their punishments upon himself in so high a degree.

SECTION II.

Wherefore, as Christ, our Redeemer, suffered for the sin of man, which is totally evil in itself, and all the circumstances, as

we have already discoursed ; so his passion was likewise every way most grievous and painful, as we shall perceive in observing those seven circumstances noted by Tully. First, behold who it is that suffers. It is he who deserves it least ; he who is innocence itself ; he who is a person as holy as the Holy Spirit of God ; he who is the offended party, yet suffers for the offender ; he who is Lord of all ; he whom the seraphims acknowledge and adore ; he who has done innumerable benefits for his very enemies ; our Father who created us, and made us of nothing ; a man most delicate for the vivacity of his spirits, and the perfection of his temper. All this must needs augment his grief, as being a person of such worth and innocence, as he deserved it least, and of so temperate and perfect a complexion, as he felt it most. This circumstance of the person who suffered, is recommended to our consideration by the apostle, when he says (Heb. 12.), think upon him "who sustained such contradiction from sinners against himself;" for he it is who now sits at the right hand of the Father, who died between two thieves. Think who it is, that was allowed no place on earth, but hung upon a tree in the air ; it is he who is to judge the living and the dead. Think who it is who suffered upon the cross ; it is he who is life eternal. Think who it is who permitted himself to be apprehended, whipped, crucified ; it is he who made the earth to tremble, and caused fire to issue out of the sanctuary, and consume those who obeyed not his holy word and law.

The second circumstance is, what it was he suffered. Certainly, more than was ever suffered by man ; injuries, affronts, inhuman and cruel torments ; he suffered suitably to his infinite charity, and that burning thirst he had to suffer for man. So excessive were his pains, that the rocks clove asunder in their presence, the mountains sunk, the elements trembled, the heavens clothed themselves in mourning, the sun and moon were darkened, and the angels of peace wept. So great they were, that the very apprehension of them made the Son of God sweat drops of blood ; so many in number, that it is held to be known by revelation, they were ninety-seven thousand three hundred and five. And afterwards, in time of his passion, he shed from his sacred eyes, as Peter Calentinus writes, to the number of seventy-two thousand two hundred drops of tears ; and this for our sins, begging the eternal Father for pardon and our salvation. (In lib. inscrip. Faustus Annus. Joan. Aquilan. Ser. de Pass.) The lashes he received from those barbarous fellows passed in number five thousand. Some say, it was revealed to St. Bernard, how they amounted to six thousand six hundred and seventy-six. Lanspergius (Lansper. hom. 50. de Pass.) writes, that a servant of God understood from heaven, that if one for the space of twenty years should every day say a hundred times the Lord's prayer, in reverence of those stripes our Saviour received, for every drop of blood

would correspond one prayer; and, according to this account, those drops amount to seven hundred and thirty thousand five hundred. He that has "numbered the multitude of the stars, the sands of the sea, the drops of rain," might well keep an account, and give also an exact knowledge of the aforesaid numbers, as being of more account. The crown of thorns was another torment very cruel, of which St. Anselm (Anselm. in Spec. Evan. Ser. 1. c. 22. Vide Joan. Burg. p. 2. c. 7. & p. 3. c. 3.) says, that it pierced his venerable head with a thousand wounds. And who can express the unspeakable torment of hanging upon the cross, the whole weight of his body sustained by his nailed hands and feet? Finally, so strange and horrible were his pains, that not only to suffer them, but even to imagine them, caused St. Lidwina to bewail them even with tears of blood. Cantipratensis (Cantip. l. 1. c. 25.) writes of a devout person, who died of mere sorrow, upon consideration of the excessive torments undergone by the Son of God. And there is no doubt, but the blessed Virgin, if it had not been for her eminent constancy, fortified by divine grace, as Albertus Magnus (Albert. Mag. super. Mis.) said, had expired in those tears of blood she poured forth at the foot of the cross. And if the sword of grief, which pierced the heart of the Mother, was so sharp, what was the grief of the Son? The passion of torments was in him real, in her but for his sake; and certainly, the compassion he had of us sinners was greater than the compassion she could have of him. And if the grief of the Virgin was so terrible, that, as St. Anselm (Anselm. de Excess. Virg.) says, all the torments endured by all bodies whatsoever, were in comparison of it little or nothing; and St. Bernard thinks that her pains were a thousand times double to those of child-birth; and St. Bernardine (Bernard. de lament. Virg. Bernardin. Ser. 61. art. 3. c. 2.) exceeding all this, is confident, that if the grief of the Virgin were divided amongst all the creatures that can suffer, all would certainly die as incapable of it: if such, then, and so great were the pains of the Virgin, what shall be said of those which Christ suffered and felt, since no sorrow was as his, no pain could stand in competition with his? If, then, in torment he suffered so much, as none but he could suffer, in honor and reputation he suffered no less, and in all ways, that the fury and envy of his enemies, assisted by the devils, could invent. And if he suffered so much by the passion of his torments, he suffered much more by the compassion of our offences.

Thirdly, the grief of his pain was much augmented by the place where he suffered, which was the court of Judea; a place where he had heretofore been much esteemed, and of late received in triumph, as a man come from heaven. And certainly, to pass suddenly from one extreme to another, from the height of honor, to the bottom of contempt and scorn, increases much our

afflictions ; for he became the most infamous man in the world, arraigned and condemned to suffer between two thieves, in a public place; designed for wicked persons and murderers, and in the presence of his Mother, which doubled the grief of his heart.

Fourthly, the persons by whom he suffered were a great aggravation to his grief. It was by those of his own nation, such as he had favored with infinite benefits ; and finding some compassion in strangers, he found none in his countrymen ; the rage and madness wherewith his enemies desired his death being such, that the Scripture compares them to dogs, wild beasts and unicorns.

The fifth circumstance, and that which most increased his sorrow, was to see those excessive pains and torments misbestowed ; foreseeing that the greatest number would not benefit themselves by them. For as the hope of profit, which is a main end in all our labors, is a great comfort to us, so the despair of it is as great an affliction. And Christ, our Redeemer, suffering, that his merits, blood and passion might profit all men, when he knew that the hundredth part would not lay hold of it, and that innumerable persons would prove ungrateful for so great a benefit, it was a grief, which, beyond all apprehension, pierced his tender and most loving heart.

Sixthly, the manner of his suffering was most grievous ; for it was by being generally abandoned of all things, not having any thing whatsoever to comfort him. His own people procured his death with great injustice, the gentiles executed it with as great cruelty, and the priests, and the learned in the law, were the leaven that soured the whole lump. The princes blew the coals, and kindled such a flame in the people, as could not be quenched with those infinite injuries and affronts which were heaped upon him ; nor were they satisfied with seeing him hang upon the cross, whom they had so unjustly punished, but rent his very bowels with their taunts and scoffs. And, which was more than all, even in his own disciples, whom he had bred up in his own school, he found little firmness and loyalty. Amongst his twelve chosen apostles, one sold him, and became the captain of those who apprehended him ; another, to whom he had given the principality over the rest, denied him thrice before his face, cursing himself, if he knew him ; and the rest forsook him in the power of his enemies. O never-to-be-paralleled example of the inconstancy of human things, and of the constancy which a Christian ought to preserve in all events ! What felt that blessed heart of our Saviour, when he saw himself surrounded by so many enemies, and so few friends left him ! Of him it was truly written, " My heart became as melted wax in the midst of my bowels." True it is, that his blessed Mother, when she could neither assist nor defend him, yet forsook him not ; but alas ! her presence did not mitigate, but increased his sorrow. The eternal Father, who alone

could help him, would not then appear for him, but gave him over to suffer with all rigor at the pleasure of his enemies; which was the more tenderly resented, as I may say, by our blessed Lord, because his enemies cast it in his teeth, saying, "He trusted in God; let him deliver him, if he will have him." But for all this, his Father would not then free him, or afford him any comfort; which our Saviour most lovingly complained of, when he said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Even a cup of water failed him to quench his scorching thirst: so that the whole manner of his passion was the most grievous and opprobrious that could be imagined.

Lastly, the time of his passion made it much more grievous. It was the eve of the passover, when the whole nation was assembled, when there was the greatest concourse of people to behold him. It was at a time, when he was known to all by the fame of his great works and miracles. It was in the flower of his age; and O what a pity was it to behold so flourishing, so beautiful, so excellently composed a body, reduced by the grievousness of his torments to such an exigence, that, as the Scripture says, his tongue stuck to the palate of his mouth; so fallen in flesh, that all his bones might be numbered; the whole structure of his body so discomposed, that he became as melted wax, or water resolved into the dust of death; dry as a piece of an earthen pot; insomuch that he seemed a worm and not a man, the scorn of the people, and shame of human nature! It is also worthy our admiration, that in that short process of the passion of Christ, he suffered so many griefs and pains, in so many kinds, and with such circumstances to aggravate them, as no man in the whole success of time since, has suffered any sort of calamity or adversity, which our Redeemer did not then suffer in a more bitter manner.

In all circumstances were the pains of Christ most grievous, because in all circumstances the offences of men were most heinous. It was convenient that he, who came to do us all good, should suffer so much evil; that he, who had no sin of his own, should undergo the punishment due to the sins of others; and that he, who was infinitely good, should suffer the evil of so much grief and torment, to the end we might be instructed that those are not evils which the world fears, but those which sin brings along with it; and that the goods of the world are so far from being real goods, that they are rather to be esteemed as evils; since the Redeemer of the world deprived himself of the goods, and burdened himself with the evils, to the end that we, imitating in our lives his most precious death, might despise all temporal goods, which are so short and false, that even the evils of the world are more true and real goods than they. Let us then be ashamed, seeing Christ in so much sorrow, to seek after pleasures. Let us have at least as great respect to our Redeemer, as Ethay, the Gethite, had to David, who, when the holy king fled from his

son Absalom, and persuaded him to follow him in that dangerous condition, made him this answer: "The Lord live, and my lord, the king, live: in what place soever thou shalt be, either dead or alive, there also shall thy servant be." If this was spoken by a stranger, what ought to be the loyalty of a natural subject? Let us bear that faith to our Saviour, which Urias did to Joah, his general, when he said, "The ark of God, and Judah, and Israel lodge in tents, and my lord Joah and the servants of my lord remain upon the earth, and shall I enter into my house, and eat, and drink, and sleep with my wife? By thy health, and the health of thy soul, O king! I will do no such thing." If Christ remain upon the cross and in sorrow, how comest thou to seek for ease? If Christ be poor, why dost thou abound? If Christ suffer, why dost thou pamper thy flesh? If Christ humble himself, why dost thou swell in pride? If Christ be in afflictions, why art thou in delights? Remember what he taught thee from the cross, and esteem only that, which he so much valued, as to deprive himself of the transitory goods of this life. Consider the afflictions and penance, which the most innocent Jesus took upon him for thy sins, that thou mayst undergo some for thyself. When the Jews were freed from the captivity of Babylon, Esdras, knowing the great sins they had fallen into, by their conversation with the gentiles, out of a sense and feeling of their transgressions, rent his garments, and tore his hair off his head and beard, afflicted himself, and abstained from food, praying to the Lord, and weeping for the sins of the people; which resentment and penance of his for the sins of others, so moved the Jews, that they began to weep and do penance themselves for their own sins, and that with so great compunction, that they trembled for sorrow, and publicly confessed their offences. Why are not Christians, then, moved with sorrow and repentance, when they behold not an Esdras, but the Son of God, so overcharged with grief and sorrow for the sins of the world, that he distilled drops of blood from the pores of his blessed body, and rent his garments, not of wool, but of his sacred humanity, which he willingly offered to be torn with scourges, thorns and nails; suffered himself to be plucked by the hair of the head and beard, and his sacred face to be buffeted and spit upon; would not taste, eat or drink any thing but gall and vinegar, weeping from the cross for the sins committed by us wretches? Let us, then, weep, afflict ourselves, and do penance for our own sins, since we see our innocent Saviour did it for the sins of others, that, imitating him in submitting ourselves to those temporal afflictions, we may be partakers of his eternal glory.

SECTION III.

Those seven circumstances, which so much aggravate the pains and torments of our Saviour Jesus Christ, in his passion, ought to

pierce our very hearts and souls with grief and sorrow. But if they should not prevail with us to despise the world, and love him only, who so infinitely loved us, yet there are other circumstances, which with new obligations will not only move, but force us, if we be not more hard than stones, to love and die for him. Whom would not the sweet manner of his passion move, seeing the Son of God suffer with so much love and patience, without complaint of any thing, loving us with that fervor, that what he did seemed little to him, ready, if it had been necessary, to suffer as much more for us? Yea, such was his burning charity towards mankind, that if there had been no other way left for our redemption, he would not have refused to continue in those bitter torments till the day of judgment. The affection of Jesus Christ, what gratitude does it not deserve? And if, in benefits, the good-will wherewith they are conferred is most to be esteemed, when the benefit is infinite, and the will of infinite love, what shall we do? If, when that traitor, who murdered Henry IV., king of France, was justly sentenced to those cruel torments wherein he died, the first-begotten son of the dead king, and heir to his kingdom, had clothed himself in the habit of the murderer, and offered to be torn in pieces for him, and to die, that he might be freed from his torments, and not only offered but actually performed it; what love and thanks would the prince deserve from that caitiff! O King of glory, and only-begotten Son of the eternal Father, inasmuch as lay in us, we were desirous to murder thy Father, and to destroy his divine essence and being, and, therefore, were most worthy of death and eternal flames. But thou wert not only willing to die for us, but effectually gavest thy blood and life, with so inhuman torments, for us, and wert prepared to suffer more and greater for our good. How shall we repay so great a love? what thanks, what gratitude for so immense a benefit? Let us also consider, what we ourselves are, for whom he suffered. For he suffered not for himself, or because it imported him; he suffered not for another God, nor for some new creature, of a superior nature to all those who now are; not for a seraphim, who had faithfully served him for an eternity of years, but for a miserable, vile creature, the lowest of all those which are capable of reason, composed of dirt, and his enemy. This should make us more grateful, that God suffered so much for us, who least deserved it.

To this may be added, that he suffered thus much for us, not that his suffering was necessary for our redemption and freedom out of the slavery of sin; but took upon him all these pains and torments, only to show his love to us, and to oblige us to imitate him, in the contempt of the world, and of all human felicity. Let us, then, behold ourselves in this mirror, and reform our lives. Let us suffer with him who suffered so much for us. Let us be thankful to him who did us so much good, and so much to his

own cost. Let it grieve our very souls, that we have offended so good a God, who suffered so many evils, that we should not be evil. Let us admire the divine goodness, who being the honor of angels, would, for so vile a creature, abase himself to the reproach of the cross. Let us love him, who so truly loved us. Let us put our trust in him, who, without asking, gave us more than we durst desire. Let us imitate this great example, proposed to us by the eternal Father, upon Mount Calvary. Let us compose our lives conformable to the death of his Son, our Saviour, in all humility, and contempt of temporal felicity, that we may thereby attain the eternal; that, humbling ourselves now, he may exalt us hereafter; that, suffering here, he may in his good time comfort us; that, tasting in this life what is bitter, we may in the other be satiated with all sweetness; and that, weeping in time, we may rejoice for all eternity; to which end our Saviour said to the great imitator of his passion, St. Francis, "Francis, take those things that are bitter, in lieu of those that are sweet, if thou intendest to be happy." And, accordingly, St. Austin (Augus. Ser. 11. ad frat.): "Brethren, know, that after the pleasures of this life, are to follow eternal lamentations; for no man can rejoice both in this world and the next. And, therefore, it is necessary, that he who will possess the one, should lose the other. If thou desirest to rejoice here, know, that thou shalt be banished from thy celestial country; but if thou shalt here weep, thou shalt even at present be counted as a citizen of heaven." And, therefore, our Lord said, "Blessed are those who weep, for they shall be comforted." And for this reason, it is not known that our Saviour ever laughed; but it is certain, that he often wept; and for this reason chose a life of pains and troubles, to show us, that that was the right way to joy and repose.

CHAPTER V.

The Importance of the Eternal, because God has made himself a Means for our obtaining it, and has left his most holy Body as a Pledge of it, in the Blessed Sacrament.

ANOTHER most potent motive to induce us to the estimation of what is eternal, and the contempt of what is temporal, is that God has, in the most holy and venerable sacrament of his body and blood, made himself a means, that we might attain the one, by despising the other; which holy mystery was instituted, that it might serve as a pledge of those eternal goods; and therefore the holy church calls it a pledge of future glory; and that it might also serve us as a viaticum, whereby we might the better pass this temporal life, without the superfluous use of those goods, which are so dangerous to us; our Lord bestowing this divine bread upon us Christians, as he did that of manna heretofore to the Hebrews.

And, therefore, as we gave a beginning to this work with a presentation of that temporal manna, which served as a viaticum to the children of Israel in the wilderness; so we will now finish it with the truth of this spiritual manna of the blessed sacrament, which is a pledge of the eternal goods, and given as a viaticum to Christian people, in the peregrination of this life.

Let a Christian, therefore, know how much it imports him to obtain the eternal, and with what earnestness his Creator desires it; that, having obliged us by those high endearments of his incarnation and passion, in suffering for us so grievous and cruel a death, would yet add such an excess of love, as to leave himself to us, in the most blessed sacrament, as a means of our salvation. Who sees not here the infinite goodness of God, since he who, as God omnipotent, is the beginning of all things, and as the chief good of all goods, and most perfect in himself, is likewise their utmost end, would yet, for our sakes, make himself a medium which is common to the creatures, and argues no perfection? Our Lord glories, in the Scripture, that he is the beginning and end of all; and with reason; for this is worthy of his greatness, and declares a perfection, whereof only God is capable. But to make himself a medium, and such a medium as was to be used according to human will, and subject to the power and disposal of man, was such a compliance with our nature, and such a desire of our salvation, as cannot be imagined. The means of our salvation may be considered, either as they are on God's part, or on man's part; for both God and man work for man's salvation. That God should serve himself for himself, in the incarnation and passion, for the salvation of man, was a high expression of his love; but yet it was God who was served, and who made use of one of the divine persons, for the end which he intends of his glory; but that man would make use of God for his own glory, is beyond what we can think. What a wonder is it, that Christ should equal himself with water, oil and balsam! For as we use water in baptism to justify ourselves, in confirmation, of balsam to sanctify and fortify ourselves, of oil in extreme unction, to purify ourselves; so, in this sacrament, we make use of Christ for the acquiring of greater grace and increase of holiness. A great matter, then, is the salvation of man, since for this purpose God, who is his end, was content to be his means. I know not how the incomprehensible goodness and charity of God can extend beyond this. Let man, therefore, reflect, how much it imports him to be saved; let him not stick at any thing that may further it; let him leave no stone unremoved; let him leave no means unattempted, since God himself becomes a means of his salvation, and to that end subjects himself to the disposition and will of a creature. Let nothing which is temporal divert him, since God was not diverted by what was eternal. If, therefore, to quit thy

honors, deny thy pleasures, distribute thy riches to the poor, be a means to save thee, stick not at it, since God stuck not at the greatness of his being, which is above all, but gave himself for thee.

The blessed sacrament was also left us as a pledge of future glory and eternal happiness. For when Christ, our Redeemer, preached to the world the contempt of temporal goods, for the gaining of the eternal, and pronounced that comfortable sentence, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" not saying, theirs shall be, but theirs is, giving it them in present; it was convenient, that, since they could not then enter into the possession of those heavenly joys, which they had purchased with all they had upon earth, that some equivalent pledge should now be given them in the time of their forbearance. This pledge is the most blessed body of our Redeemer, Christ Jesus, Son of the living God, which is of greater worth and value than the heavens themselves. Well may we then despise the fading goods of this life, when we receive in hand such a pledge of the eternal. Well may we renounce the perishing riches and the pleasures of nature, when the treasure of grace is bestowed upon us.

The blessed sacrament is also our viaticum here upon earth; whereby we are given to understand, that this life is but a pilgrimage, wherein we travel towards eternity; and that, therefore, we are not to stay and rest in what is temporal. And because we are neither to enjoy the goods of this temporal life, nor yet to enter upon those of the future, to the end we may better suffer the renunciation of the one, and sustain the hopes of the other, this blessed sacrament is given us as a viaticum; so as the soul, wandering in this valley of tears (wherein she is not to please, or detain herself in the delights of the world, since her journey is for heaven), might have something to comfort her in this absence from her celestial country. Let, us then, consider the value of the end whereto we travel, since the journey is defrayed with so precious a viaticum; and that the pleasures of this world are so prejudicial to our salvation, that this pledge is given us from heaven, to the end we should not so much as taste them. The Israelites, in their peregrination in the wilderness, had manna for their viaticum, which supplied all their necessities; for it not only served to sustain their bodies, but, whilst they fed upon it, they were not subject to infirmities, neither did their garments decay with wearing, insomuch as, having it, they had all things. All this is but a shadow of our divine viaticum; having which, we need nothing, and being provided with so celestial a good, may well spare what is temporal.

SECTION II.

A most principal end also of the institution of this most admirable sacrament, is to be a memorial of, the passion of the Son of God; which being so efficacious a motive to the contempt of

things temporal (as we have already said), our Saviour has, almost in all the things of nature, left us a draught of it. (Paleot. ad Hist. de Christ. stigmat. Adricom 2. par. descr. Hiero. n. 44. Lansp. hom. 19. de Passione. Andrad. in descrip. Terræ sanctæ. Petrus de F. A consil. Reg. Francis. lib. 5. in Const. in lib. inscrip. Faustus. Annus.) For this reason, in the holy shroud, wherein his wounded body was wrapped, when they took him from the cross, there remained miraculously imprinted the signs of his passion. For this, when loaden with his cross, the pious Veronica presented him with her veil, he returned it, enriched with the portraiture of his sacred countenance: and, as Lanspergius notes, the fingers of the armed soldier, who gave him the blow, were imprinted in the same veil. For this, when he fell prostrate in the garden, and in a sweat of blood, prayed to his Father, he left engraved upon the stone, whereon he prayed, the print of his feet, knees and hands. And not far from hence is found another stone, where, after he was apprehended, the soldiers throwing him down upon the ground, he left imprinted the end of his toes, his hand and knees; which stone, as Borcardus notes, is so hard, that it is not possible to raise or cut any thing out of it, even with iron instruments; and to this end, that the memory of his ineffable meekness and patience should be perpetual. In like manner, where he passed the brook of Cedron, he left another mark of his sacred feet, as likewise of the rope wherewith they carried him tied. So firmly would our Saviour have the memory of his passion fixed in our hearts, that he has left the signs of it in the very rocks.

There has been also seen an oriental jasper, accidentally found, whereon the dolorous countenance of our Saviour has been exactly formed. And blessed Aloysius de Gonzaga, walking upon the sea-shore, found (with great content of his spirit) a pebble, whereon were distinctly figured the five wounds of Christ, our Redeemer. And not only in stones, but in several other pieces of nature, as St. Anastasius Sinaita (Anast. Sinaita in Hexamer.) observes, he has left us no obscure remembrances of his cross and passion. In the flower granadilla are perfectly represented the nails, pillar and crown of thorns. In dividing the fruit of the tree musa, appears in some of them the image of a cross; in others, of Christ crucified; and in Ghent they hold in great esteem the root of a beautiful flower, brought from Jerusalem, wherein is also lively represented a crucifix. Neither are the elements left free from such representations. Alfonso I., of Portugal, beheld in the air an escutcheon with the five wounds; and the emperor Constantine, the principal instrument of the passion, the cross, which has also divers other times appeared. But what more gracious and loving demonstration of the memory, which he desires we should still preserve of his torments, than the wounds which he has imprinted upon the persons of many of his servants?

For besides St. Francis (Blos. lib. 15. c. 3. Trithem. in Crim. ad an. 1560. Surius 14 Aprilis. Mosc. in vita S. Claræ), who was marked with the most evident signs of his favor, the like were received by St. Gertrude and St. Lucia of Ferrara. And what more express memorial of the passion of our Redeemer, than the heart of St. Clara of Monte Falco, in which was found the image of Christ crucified, the pillar, whip, lance, and other instruments of the passion? We should never make an end, if we should recount all those several ways, by which Christ, our Saviour, has represented to us his death and passion, to the end we should ever have them present and fixed in our memory. But, above all, the most blessed sacrament (in which divine mystery, the lively representation of his death is as often repeated, as his holy body is consecrated in the whole world) was a great demonstration of his infinite love towards mankind. Wherein he gives us to understand, that he desires not only once, but a million of times to die for us, and that, though he cannot now return again to be crucified, by reason of the impassibility of his glorified body, yet his divine charity has found a way, after an unbloody and impassible manner, to repeat the sacrifice of the cross, and the fruit of our redemption. How great a gratitude do we owe our Saviour for so infinite an expression of his good-will towards us! and how can we be grateful, if forgetful of so profitable and advantageous a benefit? Let not, then, his passion depart from our thoughts; but let us rather depart from our pleasures, and despise all human felicity, since we behold the Lord of the world in such humility.

Moreover, this most blessed sacrament is not only a memorial of the passion of Jesus Christ, but of the incarnation and wonderful work of God; and not only brings into our memory what Christ did, when he suffered for us, but what the eternal Word did when he became flesh for us; that immense God, to whom the whole globe of the earth serves but as a footstool, descending from heaven, and so far lessening himself as to cover that infinite majesty under the form of a servant; of which this divine sacrament is a most excellent and lively representation. For in it also the God of heaven, being already incarnate and made man, descends from heaven, and veils himself under the accidents of a little bread and wine, and there is, as it were, annihilated for us, and become nothing. Besides, as in the eucharist we receive Christ crucified, so in it also we receive the Word incarnate; insomuch, as these two great wonders of God, the passion and incarnation, are not only represented, but as it were multiplied to us in this blessed sacrament; which was a high thought of God, and according to what he said by his prophet David (Psal. xxxix.): "Thou hast made thy wonders many, O Lord. And there is none who is like unto thee in thy cogitations." Here God made his wonders (that is, his passion and incarnation) many, repeating and, as it were,

multiplying them in this blessed sacrament ; which was a most high thought of him who is the supreme wisdom ; nor could it enter into any understanding but that of the Divinity, that which was so extraordinary, and so far above the reach of all created capacities, as the Son of God to be sacrificed, and the eternal Word to descend from heaven, and be made man, should become so ordinary and familiar, as we daily see it in the use of this divine mystery. But God did not only here make his wonders many, but made them great, as the same David cries out : " How magnified are thy works, O Lord ! Thy cogitations are most profound." (Psal. xxxix.) For although the works of the passion and incarnation are so great, yet they are as it were enlarged, and made greater by this holy sacrament. The greatness of the work of the incarnation consisted in this, that God abased himself and was made man ; and the greatness of that of the passion, in that he humbled himself to death. But in this sacrament he abases and humbles himself yet lower, becoming food for man, which is less than to be man, or to die, which is natural to man. Besides this, the greatest fruit of the incarnation and passion is, after a most admirable manner, particularly applied in this blessed sacrament to every one who receives it worthily. The death and passion of Christ upon Mount Calvary was, no doubt, a great work of God ; but in this mystery we behold the same death, passion and sacrifice, after an unbloody and impassible manner, which is certainly the greater miracle, and expresses more the divine power. The incarnation, likewise, when the eternal Word entered into the womb of a virgin, was a great work of God ; but in this mystery it is in a certain manner extended and made greater, and is, therefore, called an extension of the incarnation, our Lord here entering into the breast of every Christian, and uniting himself to him.

These are the marvels of the law of grace ; concerning which the prophet Isaias said to the Lord, " When thou shalt do wonders, we shall not sustain them. Thou hast descended, and the mountains melted at thy presence. From the beginning they have not heard, nor understood with their ears, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what thou hast prepared for those who expect thee." The prophet speaks of those wondrous works, which were to be seen at the coming of the Messiah, which were to be such as the world had never heard of, nor had ever entered into any thought but that of God ; and, therefore, the apostle, alleging this place, says, " that the eye hath not seen, nor the ear hath heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for those who love him : " since over and above those two stupendous wonders, of taking flesh and dying for us, he has given himself as food to those souls, who remain in his grace, and love him ; which is so great and marvellous a work, as only God could think of it, and besides God none. And

as only God can truly value it, so it is not in the power of man sufficiently to acknowledge it; no human heart being able to support the weight of such an obligation, and the greatness of the divine love, which shines forth in this wonder of wonders. Tertullian (Tertul. lib. de Patien. cap. 1.) said, the greatness of some goods were intolerable; which, according to the prophet Isaias, is verified in this divine good and benefit, which we were not able to support. Wherefore, it is called in Holy Scripture, "The good; or the good thing of God;" because it is a good and a benefit, which, more clearly than the sun, discovers the infinite and ineffable goodness of God, to the astonishment and amazement of a human heart; and, therefore, the prophet Oseas says, "They shall be astonished at the Lord, and at his good;" because this divine benefit amazes and astonishes the soul of man, to see how good the Lord is, and how great the good which he communicates to us; all which tends to no other end than to make us despise the goods of the earth, and to esteem only those of heaven, which we attain to by this divine mystery. For this, therefore, did Christ, our Redeemer, institute this most blessed sacrament, that by it we might withdraw our hearts from things temporal, and settle our affections upon those which are eternal, for which it is most particularly efficacious, as those who worthily receive it have full experience.

SECTION III.

Wherefore, let that soul, who goes to communicate, consider, who it is enters into him; and who he is himself, who entertains so great a guest. Let him call to mind with what reverence the blessed Virgin received the eternal Word, when he entered into her holy womb; and let him know it is the same Word, which a Christian receives into his entrails in this divine sacrament. Let him, therefore, endeavor to approach this holy table with all reverence, love and gratitude; which ought, if possible, to be greater than that of the blessed Mother. For then the obligation of mankind was not so great as it is now. For neither she nor we were then indebted to him for his dying upon the cross. Let him consider, that he receives the same Christ who sits at the right hand of God the Father; that it is he who is the supreme Lord of heaven and earth; he whom the angels adore; he who created and redeemed us, and is to judge the living and the dead: he who is of infinite wisdom, power, beauty and goodness. If a soul should behold him, as when St. Paul beheld him, and was struck blind with his light and splendor, how would he fear and reverence him! Let him know that he is not now less glorious in the host, and that he is to approach him with as much reverence, as if he saw him in his throne of glory. With much reason did St. Teresa of Jesus say to a devout soul, to whom she appeared after death, that we upon earth ought to behave ourselves to

the blessed sacrament, as the blessed in heaven do towards the divine Essence, loving and adoring it with all our power and forces. Consider, also, that he, who comes in person to thee, is that self-same Lord that required so much reverence, that he struck Oza dead, because he did but touch with his hand the ark of his testament, and slew five hundred thousand Bethshamites for their looking on it; and thou not only seest and touchest, but receivest him into thy very bowels. See, then, with what reverence thou oughtest to approach him. The angels and seraphims tremble before his greatness, and the just are afraid. Do thou then tremble, fear and adore him. St. John, standing but near to an angel, remained without force, astonished at the greatness and beauty of his majesty: and thou art not to receive an angel, but the Lord of angels into thy breast. It adds much to our endearment of this great benefit of our Saviour, that it is not only great by the greatness of that which is bestowed, but by the meanness of him who receives it. For what art thou but a most vile creature, composed of clay and dirt, full of misery, ignorance, weakness and malice? If the centurion held himself unworthy to receive Christ under his roof, and St. Peter, when our Saviour was in this mortal life, deemed himself not worthy to be in his presence, saying, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man!" and St. John Baptist thought himself not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoe; how much more oughtest thou judge thyself unworthy to receive him into thy bowels, being now in his glory, seated at the right hand of God the Father! The angels of heaven are not pure in his sight; what purity shouldst thou have to entertain him in thy breast! If a mighty king should visit a poor beggar in his cottage, what honor, what respect would it confer upon him! Behold, God, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords, comes to visit thee, not in thy house, but within thyself. Seven years did Solomon spend in building a temple, wherein to place the ark of his testament: why dost thou not spend some time in making thyself a temple of God himself? Noah was a hundred years in preparing a vessel wherein to save those who were to escape the deluge; why dost thou not spare some days or hours, to make thyself a tabernacle for the Saviour of the world? Behold thy own unworthiness, and what thou goest about. Moses, when he was to make an ark for the tables of the law, not only made choice of precious wood, but covered it all with gold: thou miserable and vile worm, why dost thou not prepare and adorn thyself, to receive the Lord of the law?

Consider, also, what is the end for which thy Saviour comes to thee. It is, by communicating his grace, to make thee partaker of his divinity. He comes to cure thy sores and infirmities; he comes to give remedy to thy necessities; he comes to unite himself to thee; he comes to deify thee. Behold, then, the infinity

of his divine goodness, who thus melts himself in communication with his creatures. Behold what is here given thee, and for what it is given thee. God gives himself to thee, that thou mayst be all divine, and nothing left in thee of earth. In other benefits, God bestows his particular gifts upon thee; but here he gives thee himself, that thou mightst also give thyself to him, and be wholly his. If from the incarnation of the Son of God; we gather the great love he bore to mankind, passing for his sake from that height of greatness to that depth of humiliation, as to enclose himself in the womb of a virgin; behold how in this he loves thee, since, to sustain thee in the life of grace, he has made himself the true food of thy soul, and comes from the right hand of the eternal Father to enclose himself in thy most impure breast. Jesus Christ comes also to make thee one body with himself, that thou mayst, after an admirable manner, be united to him, and made partaker, not only of his spirit, but of his blood. That, which this consideration ought to work in the breast of a Christian, may appear by what a less than this wrought in the heart of a heathen. The emperor and philosopher Antoninus (Anton. lib. 1. et 2.) writes, that in respect we are a part of the world, we ought to rest content and satisfied with what accidents soever shall befall us, and to do nothing unworthy of reason. What ought we then do for being a part of Christ? Our works certainly ought not to be only worthy of angels, but of the sons of God.

Neither does the manner, by which this divine benefit is conferred, a little endear it to thee. It is with such singular love, as is in uniting himself to thee; it is in feeding thee with his precious body and blood; it is by humbling himself as much as he could for thee; it is by treading under foot the most constant laws of nature, and working more prodigious miracles for thee than Moses did in Egypt; all which is a demonstration of that infinite desire wherewith he intends thy good, sticking at nothing that may advance it. God gives himself to thee, after the most easy and facile manner for man, and after the most extraordinary for God. He gives himself to thee for meat. Nothing is more natural for man than to eat, and nothing more supernatural than that God should serve as meat. Let him, then, who comes from receiving his heavenly food, consider what he owes for so unspeakable a benefit. Let him make account, that Christ, seated in his heart, speaks to him after the manner he spoke to his apostles, when he had washed their feet. Thou knowest, O soul! what I have done to thee; thou knowest the gift I have bestowed upon thee; thou knowest the honor and favor I have conferred upon thee; thou knowest what thou hast received; thou knowest what thou hast within thee. Know, it is thy God and Redeemer; know, it is he who desires all good to thee. Be, therefore, thankful to him; desire nothing of earth, but fix wholly upon what is eternal, and thy chief good.

CHAPTER VI.

Whether Temporal Things are to be demanded of God ; and that we only ought in our Prayers to aim at Goods Eternal.

THE difference between temporal and eternal is easily discovered by the small account which God makes of granting things temporal, and the great pleasure he takes in our demanding things eternal. The temporal is sometimes granted as a chastisement, the eternal as a great reward ; and, were it not for the infinite merits of his Son, would not be granted at all. For this reason, Christ himself commands us, that we should ask the Father in his name, assuring us, that whatsoever is so demanded, shall be granted ; and when he invites his disciples to ask, he tells them, that hitherto they had demanded nothing ; esteeming that although indeed they had asked him some things temporal, yet, because they had not as yet demanded any thing that was eternal, they had asked nothing. So that the promise of our Saviour, that his Father would grant all our petitions in his name, is to be understood only, when we petition for the eternal goods of grace and glory. The temporal is of so little worth, that for itself, or in his name, Christ would not have us ask it. Neither does he promise that it should be granted ; for, in the divine acceptance, all that does not conduce and help to our salvation, is reputed as nothing. Whereupon St. Austin (Augus. Trac. in Joan.) says, "The joy is demanded in the name of Christ, if we understand divine grace, if we demand that life which is true happiness. If any thing else be demanded, nothing is demanded ; not that in reality in itself it is nothing, but that, in comparison of so great things, whatsoever besides is desired, is to be esteemed as nothing ;" insomuch that, according to St. Austin, though you demand temporal things a thousand times over, yet you demand nothing.

For this reason, many wise men have doubted, whether we may lawfully petition God for the temporal things of the world. I will first deliver the opinions of the greatest philosophers, and then how the greatest divines have decided this controversy. Marcus Aurelius, in the name of many philosophers, says, that we are not at all to demand what is temporal, but that we are rather to pray, that we may not esteem or desire them ; and, therefore, in a most prudent discourse, wherein he wants nothing of a Christian, but the acknowledgment of one sole God, instead of many, he thus argues (Marc. Antonin. lib. 9.) : "Either the gods can do something, or not. If not, why dost thou pray to them ? If they can, why dost thou not pray to them to grant, that thou mayst neither fear nor desire the things of the earth ? not to be afflicted more with their want than their possession ? For if the gods are able to assist men at all, they are able to assist them in this. Perhaps

thou wilt say, the gods have subjected these things to thy own power. Be it so. Yet tell me, is it not better that thou shouldst use these things, which are in thy power, with freedom, than, with a servile and abject mind, to be solicitous and afflict thyself for those things which are not in thy power? And who has told thee, that the gods do not help us in those things which are subject to us? Begin, then, to pray for those things, and thou shalt see what will happen. This man prays he may enjoy such a sensual pleasure: do thou pray thou mayst have no such desire. Another prays he may be eased of something which troubles him: do thou pray thou mayst have no need to be eased. Another prays he may not lose his son: do thou pray thou mayst not fear it. Make thy prayers after this manner, and see what will follow." Insomuch, then, as it was the opinion of this philosopher, that we should not pray to God for things temporal, but for the right way of using them, which is true virtue, let us also hear what was said by Socrates, the most excellent of moral philosophers, who judged, as St. Thomas (S. Tho. 2. 2. q. 83. art. 5.) relates of him, that nothing in particular was to be demanded of God, but only that he would give us good things; because God only knows what is good and expedient for us, and men, for the most part, desire and pray for those things which, if obtained, are hurtful. This opinion is approved by St. Thomas, and the rest of the divines, inasmuch as concerns temporal things, which we may use ill. Whereupon the angelical doctor concludes, that we are not determinately to pray for any thing temporal, but only for spiritual and eternal. These are only those which ought and may be absolutely prayed for; other things, as they serve to obtain these, in a secondary way, and as much of them only as is sufficient, and expedient for them to obtain the eternal.

It is most certain, that those prayers which are offered to God only for the obtaining of things eternal, without respect to any temporal or earthly commodity, are as a sweet savor to the Lord, like that rod of perfume, so much celebrated in the Canticles, composed of incense, myrrh and spices, which ascended straight to heaven. Whereupon St. Gregory says, that prayer is called that little rod of sweet smoke; because, whilst it only supplicates for eternal blessings, it mounts directly to heaven without inclining to any thing that is earthly. Well may it be seen how little our Saviour is pleased with earthly petitions, by that answer he gave to the wife of Zebedæus, when she desired that her two sons might have the honor to sit, one at the right hand of his throne, and the other at the left; our Saviour answered, they knew not what they asked; because, as St. Chrysostom says, their petition was for the things temporal, and not spiritual and eternal. Certainly, a fool he is, who, when he may have heaven for asking, trifles away his time in demanding things of the earth. A fool he is who, when he needs but to demand eternal glory, buries

himself in praying for temporal honors. A fool he is who, having but to ask grace from God, loses his time in asking favors from men. Certainly, he knows not what he prays for, who prays to be rich. He knows not what he prays for, who prays for great places and commands. Finally, who prays for honors, accommodations, pleasures, or any thing that ends in time, knows not what he prays for, because he knows not how little is all that which time consumes.

SECTION II.

Paludanus (Palud. Enarr. 1. de S. Jacobo) observes three errors in the petition of the mother of St. James and St. John: The first, that she did not observe a due order in the petition; the second, that it was not clear and free from affections of flesh and blood; and the third, that the subject of it was vain and unprofitable. All these errors are found when, not attending to the eternal, we petition for what is temporal. For of the first, who sees not that he who demands temporal things, violates and perverts all order? For what more disorderly proceeding, than to demand little, when we may obtain much; to sue for that whereof we have no need, and to neglect that which is extremely necessary? The necessities of the body hold no comparison with those of the soul. The soul has more necessity of divine grace than the body of food. The soul has more enemies, and stands, therefore, in more need of the favor and assistance of Heaven. It is against her that the infernal powers have conspired, and, therefore, it is she who stands in most necessity of divine succor. Gelasius (Gelas. contra Pelag. Epis. 5. lib. 6.) the pope, speaking of our first parents, says, that when they were in the state of innocence, replenished with all those gifts of graces, wherewith God had enriched them, and that they had not those adversaries which now we have (for neither the world nor the flesh were then their enemies); yet because they did not pray for the divine assistance and favor, that they fell into sin. Having received, says this great pope, such abundance of grace, yet because they did not pray (as there is no mention that they did), they were not secure. How needful is it, then, for us to pray, who want that original justice, have our nature weakened and corrupted by sin, our flesh rebellious against the soul, the world with all its instruments of vanity and deceit, and so many occasions and dangers of sinning, our enemies, and the devil himself, irritated by those singular favors expressed towards our nature by the Son of God, more fierce against us than before! So that it is not possible to declare the great need we have of divine grace. And now to forget this great necessity, and to forbear crying to heaven for a remedy, from whence we can only hope it, how great a folly and disorder is it! If a man in the dog-days were exposed naked in some desert, against the scorching beams of the sun, and ready to

perish for thirst, and should meet one who were furnished with plenty of cool water, would he not ask some to refresh him? or, if he forbore to ask it, would he demand a warm jacket, which were only useful in winter, and in summer a burden and a trouble? Certainly, a greater madness and disorder cannot be imagined; and yet ours is far worse, if we demand temporal goods, which can only hinder and entangle us, and neglect to pray for the water of divine grace, without which we are certain to perish. But even in temporal things themselves, we know not what order to observe in our demands, because we are ignorant which are most convenient for us. Who knows whether it be better for him to be sick, or in health; since it may so happen, that, being in health, he may fall into some grievous sin, and be damned, and, being sick, he may repent and be saved? Who knows whether poverty or wealth may be more convenient for him; since, being in abundance, he may forget God, and being in necessity of all things, he may have recourse to his holy service? Who knows whether it be better for him to be honored, or suffer confusion; since honor may puff him up in vanity, and humiliation may make him prudent and wary? No man knows what is good or evil for him. That which we desire is oftentimes our ruin and destruction, and those evils which we weep for, as often turn to our greatest happiness. How can there, then, be any order in our prayers for temporal things, whereof we are totally ignorant whether they are good or hurtful.

The second great error, in our prayers for temporal things, is the inordinate affection and want of pure intention, which accompany such petitions; whereas, our prayers ought only to proceed from a pure and mortified mind, wholly intent upon the service of God. To signify this, the fire that was to burn the incense, was brought from the altar of holocausts; and that our prayers may be acceptable, and of a sweet savor to God, they are to spring from an inflamed heart, sacrificed to his divine Majesty in a true holocaust of our whole will and affections; and he who demands any temporal things from God Almighty, after another manner, may justly fear, lest they may be granted for his greatest punishment. Therefore, St. Thomas (S. Tho. 2. 2. q. 83. art. 19.) says, that our Lord God grants to sinners what they desire with an evil affection, for a chastisement of their desires. So he granted quails to the murmuring Israelites, who died with the morsel in their mouths. We ought, therefore, to be cautious in our prayers, and tremble at our own desires, since their success may prove so dangerous to us. And I wonder not at all that he, who desires the goods of this world, is often punished in the grant of his petition; since it is a kind of impudence to use God as a medium for the obtaining of that which does or may separate us from him, who is our chief and utmost end. Guigo Carthusianus (Guigo Carthus. in Medit.) says, that he who prays for temporal

things, uses God Almighty, as the spouse does her husband, when she desires him to bring her with his own hands some vile slave, with whom she may sin. So we, desiring temporal goods, increase our affection to the things of the earth, which make us forget the love of our Creator, and, praying for them, pray for the instruments and occasions of offending them. Let us not commit this treason against our Lord God, but let us ask what may redound to his glory, and our own profit, which is only that which is spiritual and eternal; to wit, his grace, his knowledge, the imitation of his Son, the contempt of the world, and what is conformable to his holy will. This we may safely ask, and this he will certainly give us, because it is for our good. And, therefore, in the prayer which our Lord himself has taught us, when we have said, "Thy will be done," we proceed in a bolder manner, and say, in an imperative way, "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses," having then a kind of certainty of obtaining, when we have first conformed our prayers to the divine will; and it is then, as Origen notes, a singular confidence we have in God, to command what we pray for.

The third error in our petition for temporal goods is, that we pray for things vain, without substance or profit; for such is all temporal greatness and felicity, short, vain, inconstant, transitory and unworthy the heart of man, which ought wholly to fix upon the eternal, and trample the rest under foot, like that mysterious woman in the Apocalypse, who was surrounded and penetrated by the sun, which filled the heart and bowels, but trod the moon under her feet; the sun, which is perfectly circular, being a symbol of eternity, and the moon, which is defective and mutable, a figure of the temporal. The sun has its own proper light; the moon none, but what she borrows from the sun. In the same manner, the eternal is a good in itself, and desirable for itself; the temporal has no good at all, but what it acquires by being a means of obtaining the eternal. All human felicity is but vanity, smoke, thorns, deceit and misery. With what face can a Christian demand such stuff from God Almighty? and such is all human prosperity in God's acceptance. Out of which consideration, St. Chrysostom (Chrysost. Hom. 79. in Mat.) speaks in this manner: "A Roman judge will not understand thy allegations, unless thou speak to him in the Roman tongue. In the like manner, Christ will not hear thee, unless thou speak to him in his own language, and thy mouth be conformable to his." In the language of our Redeemer, riches are thorns, honors smoke, and pleasures vipers; and, therefore, he who prays for things of this nature, prays but for so many evils. And, as there is no father that, if his son, instead of bread, demanded a scorpion, would give it him; so God, to those whom he loves, and holds as children, when they ask him temporal goods, denies them, because he sees they are not good for them. For this reason, the honor

demanding by the wife of Zebedæas for her two sons, was denied by our Saviour, with this answer, that they knew not what they asked, demanding that for a good, which was not; and in room of the honor, which they desired in a temporal kingdom, he gave them martyrdom, which they thought not of, which conducted them to real and eternal happiness.

Let us learn, therefore, how, and for what to pray, that we err not in a matter of such importance; for if the error be so much greater, by how much the matter, in which it falls, is of greater moment, an error in matter of prayer must be most great, especially having a divine precept, and an infallible promise, that, if we demand what is necessary for our salvation in his name, we shall not fail of obtaining it. Let us not, therefore, ask that in the name of our Saviour, for which he would not die, but that which he bought for us with his precious blood and life, which are the blessings of heaven, and our eternal felicity. For this let us sigh, for this let us pray; and let us reflect how great and faulty a carelessness it is, not to pray ever for that which imports us so much as heaven, and for which, only, we have a certain promise to be heard, and not for other things, which the world esteems and time consumes.

CHAPTER VII.

How happy are those who renounce Temporal Goods, for the securing of the Eternal.

If all which has been said, suffice not to make us despise the goods of the earth, for the gaining of those blessings we hope for in heaven; and if neither the example nor remonstrances of our Saviour will serve to make us esteem the eternal and condemn the temporal, but that we will, for all this, prefer the one, though little and base, because present, before the other, though great and immense, because to come; yet let our present interest, and the word and promise of the Son of God move us, which certainly, if seriously weighed, will not only persuade us to despise, but totally to renounce the goods of this world, as many of the philosophers have done, that they might more freely enjoy the pleasures and commodities of this life, and many saints, for the hopes they have had of the other. Let us here call to mind what was said by the Saviour of the world: "Whosoever shall leave father, or mother, or brothers, or sisters, or house, or land, for my sake, shall in this life receive a hundred-fold, and after death life eternal." In which words we are to consider the greatness of the promise, and the importance of that, for which so great things are promised. Without doubt, it may be of high concernment to renounce our temporal goods, since the Son of God invites us to it with so great promises; and if it be convenient to renounce

them as things poisonous and hurtful to us, we can have no excuse for not despising them; or at least, if we do not despise them, yet we can have no reason to love and prefer them before the eternal. Much, and extremely much, it will concern us to despise that, which is convenient for us to leave, and as much to pluck from our hearts the affection of those things which are not fit for us to possess. Neither is it much to say, that it is advantageous for us to renounce these temporal things, since St. Bonaventure judged it necessary; and, therefore, according to the apostle, says, that the root of all evil is avarice, from which, and from pride, which accompanies it, all sins have their birth, food and increase. Whereupon St. Austin calls it the foundation of the city of Babylon. This covetousness is seated in the affections of the soul, as in its proper subject, but is fed and receives nourishment from those exterior things which we possess. Wherefore, wholly to extirpate it, two things are necessary, not only to quit this interior thirst and gaping after riches, but also that exterior possession of them. The first is to be done by the will and spirit, but the second by an actual and effectual execution and forsaking them; and it is for this that we are promised in this life a hundred-fold, and in the next eternal felicity. O how great a distance is there discovered between things temporal and eternal, since the only hope of the eternal bestows more upon us, even in this life, than we can receive from the dominion and possession of all that is temporal! Temporal goods, by being enjoyed and possessed, are not so much as doubled, but by being renounced for Christ, are multiplied a hundred-fold, and hereafter confer the kingdom of heaven. Abundance of temporal goods (as has been already observed) hinders and obstructs the pleasures and contents of this life, for which we seek them, and hereafter throw their possessors into hell-flames; so that they are not only the occasion of eternal pain, but, by anticipation, of many temporal inconveniencies. For I know not how it comes to pass, the most rich are not the most contented, nor yet the least necessitated. It seems their goods diminish in their hands, and are of less value amongst them, than the poor; at least, ten is not worth to a rich man so much as one to a poor; so that the poor, who have renounced their goods for Christ, find them multiplied a hundred-fold, and the rich, who, forgetting their Redeemer, employ themselves wholly in heaping up wealth, find them as much diminished, and, of a hundred, enjoy not one. Besides, the rich are so encumbered with cares, dangers, fears and perturbations, that they know not the true contents of this life, and yet run the hazard of eternal damnation in the other. But, on the contrary, those who are poor in spirit, and have forsaken their possession for Christ, are in this world filled with joy, peace and comfort, and in the next enjoy the kingdom of heaven. O how happy are they who understand this, and know how to change earth for

heaven ! O how truly does Christ call happy the poor in spirit, who have left all for his sake, and therefore enjoy a double happiness, the one present, and the other future ; here a hundred-fold for that which they possess not, and hereafter the possession of life eternal ! O how happy is he, who knows with the riches of the earth to purchase the treasure of glory in death, and in life to receive them a hundred-fold doubled !

This, according to abbot Abraham (Cassian. collat. ult. c. ult.), is fully verified in religious persons, who have quitted all they have upon earth to live in a state of poverty ; who, for one father whom they have left, find a hundred in religion, and for one brother, a hundred who embrace them with Christian charity ; for one possession, a hundred possessions, and for one house, a hundred houses, in the multitude of monasteries founded for their order ; so that there is no doubt, but this reward is not only doubled under them a hundred-fold, but multiplied to a far greater proportion. The same may be seen in other servants of God, who serve him in voluntary poverty, who by how much, as Bede (Beda de Nat. Sancti Benedic.) notes, they have served God with more affection in renouncing their temporal goods, by so much has God stirred up the affections and liberalities of others to supply and assist them in all their wants. So that they are served with the goods of all, and, as the apostle says, having nothing, possess all.

But although this recompense should fail us, yet one a hundred-fold greater than this will not fail us, which is that noted by St. Jerome (Lib. 3. in Mat.) : " He who for our Saviour's sake leaves carnal things, shall receive spiritual, which, in comparison and value, are as if some small number were compared with a hundred." We seek the goods of the earth for the ease and content of life. But if this may better, and with more advantage, be acquired by the contempt and leaving them, what can we desire more ? Certainly, he who quits all for Christ, enjoys a hundred times more content and pleasure, than he who flows in the greatest riches and abundance ; for (according to what has been said) the goods of this life are tedious and troublesome even to life itself ; so the freedom from those cares and incommodities, which accompany them, eases the heart, and makes our lives more sweet and pleasant. Whereupon St. Chrysostom notes, that as the children, in the midst of the fiery furnace in Babylon, were refreshed by a cool wind and pleasant dew, so those who are in poverty (which the holy Scripture calls a furnace) are recreated by a gentle air from heaven, and the dew of the Holy Spirit ; and that in so high a manner, as St. Bernard, speaking of the monks of Clairvaux, says, that they drew from their poverty, fasts and austere penances, such joy and spiritual comfort, that they were jealous and afraid, lest God had given them their whole and complete reward in this world ; and it seemed to them, that

having their heaven in this life, they should lose it in that to come. Whereupon it was necessary for St. Bernard to prove to them, in one of his sermons, that he did injure the grace of the Holy Spirit, who placed grief in what it communicated. Certainly, the servants of God are highly rewarded, since they receive even in this life such celestial joys, for those temporal trifles which they have quitted. If one, for a certain weight of copper, were to receive the like in gold, I believe he would think he had made a good bargain. The like exchange they make, who receive those spiritual joys for the pleasures of the earth. This is fully verified in that which happened to Arnulphus, the Cistercian, who, being rich, noble, and abounding with all which the world esteems, moved by the sermons of St. Bernard, became a monk in the monastery of Clairvaux, where, after a holy life led in much rigor and austerity, he at last became very infirm, and through the great grief and pains which he suffered, would often fall into faintings and trances; but still, when he recovered from his fits, would cry out, "It is true, it is true, which thou hast said, O blessed Jesus!" And to some present, who thought the extremity of pain did make him rave, he would say, "Brethren, I have spoken this in my right judgment and senses; for that which our Lord promised in the gospel, that he who for his sake should leave father, mother, or goods, should receive a hundred-fold, and hereafter life eternal, I now find true by experience. For this grief and pain which I feel is so sweet to me, out of the hope I have of eternal happiness, that I would not lose these pains and this hope, not only for what I have left already, but for a hundred times more. And if to me, who am so great a sinner, those pains which I deserve, are a hundred times more sweet than any former power and pleasures in the world; what are they to a just man, and to the zealous and devout religious? By this it evidently appears, that spiritual joy, though but in hope, affords a thousand times more pleasure and content, than the possession of all the carnal and temporal delights in the world." At what this servant of God said, all who were present remained astonished, that an ignorant man, wholly unlettered, should understand and speak of so high matters.

SECTION II.

The joys of the poor in Christ Jesus, who have renounced all for his love, spring from two causes: First, from that content which poverty itself, by its freedom from temporal troubles and the embroilments of life, brings along with it. And this even the gentiles confessed. And, therefore, Apuleius called it merry and cheerful poverty. And Seneca would say, that a turf of earth gave a sounder sleep than wool dyed in Tyrian purple. And Anaxagoras (taught by experience), that he found more content in sleeping upon the earth, and feeding upon herbs, than in down

beds, and delicious banquets, accompanied with an unquiet mind. The second cause of this joy is not the nature of poverty, but the particular grace of God, who rewards those with the pleasures of heaven, who have renounced those of earth, and fills with spiritual riches those who have left the temporal. For, in truth, poverty is much beloved and privileged by Christ; and therefore he rewards the poor, even in this life, with many particular graces and favors.

Besides this, the many and great commodities, which this contempt of earthly things brings along with it, may serve as a reward equivalent to a hundred, yea, a thousand-fold. For if all the world were given to escape the committing of one sin, it were not an equal value; and by evangelical poverty and contempt of the world, the sins which we avoid are innumerable. For by it we not only pluck up the root, but quit the instruments of sinning. Take away abundance, and you take away insolence, arrogance and pride, which spring from it, as smoke from fire; you take away also the means of committing many other sins, which riches feed and nourish. Neither is the attaining of many virtues, which accompany poverty, as humility, modesty and temperance, of less value than the avoidance of those sins. And, therefore, it is a very great truth, which St. Chrysostom (Homil. 8. in Ep. ad Hebr.) notes and ponders, that in poverty we possess virtues more easily. Neither is it slightly to be valued, that the state of poverty assists much towards our satisfaction for those sins we have committed, according to what is spoken to the just man by Isaias, the prophet: "I have chosen thee (that is, I have purified thee) in the furnace of poverty." It is likewise a great matter to be free and uninterested in the base and unprofitable employments of the earth, whereby the poor have time to exercise virtue, to converse with God and his angels, and contemplate eternity.

The honor, also, and dignity to command these things below, which is attained by the poor in spirit, may well be valued at a hundred-fold. For as it is a great baseness in the rich to be slaves to their avarice, and to things so vile as riches; so it is a great honor to the poor to exempt themselves from this slavery and servitude, and to lord it over all: and, as the apostle says, by contemning all, to possess all; so as there are no riches, no kingdom comparable to this of poverty. Kingdoms have their limits and boundaries, which they pass not; but this kingdom of poverty is not straitened by any bounds; but for the same reason, that it has nothing, has all things; for the heart cannot be said to possess any thing without being lord of it; and it cannot be lord of it without being superior to it, and not that, unless it subject and subjugate it to itself. So as it is by so much more a possessor, by how much it is more lord and superior. Now he who desires to be rich, must needs love those things, without which he cannot be rich; nor can he love them without care, solicitude and slavery; but he who contemns them, is not only lord but

possessor of them. And for this cause, St. John Climacus (Grad. 17.) said very well, that the poor religious person, who casts all his care upon God, is lord of all the world, and all men are his servants. Moreover, the true love of poverty does not basely cleave to these temporal things; for all it has, or can have, it respects nothing; and if it want any thing, it is no more troubled, than if it wanted so much dung and dirt.

But above all rewards is that of God, who is possessed by poverty, and in St. Ambrose's (in Psal. cxviii.) opinion, is that hundred-fold, which is received for what we leave. For as the tribe of Levi, which had no part in the distribution of the land of Palestine, received this promise from God, that he would be their share and possession of inheritance; so with much reason to those who voluntarily refuse their parts in the goods of the earth, God himself becomes their possession, riches, and all good, even in this world; and passes so much further, as to give them in the other the kingdom of heaven. Whereupon St. Austin (Aug. Ser. 28. de Ver. Apost.) speaks in this manner: "Great happiness and felicity is that of a Christian, who, with the rich price of poverty, purchases the precious reward of glory. Wilt thou see how rich and precious it is? The poor man buys and obtains that by poverty, which the rich man cannot with all his treasures." And it was, certainly, a most high counsel in our Lord God, and an act worthy of his divine understanding, to make poverty the price of his glory, that none might want wherewith to purchase it. Wherefore many of the saints have been so enamored of poverty, that they have purchased it with more eagerness than the rich have fled from it, and have had this advantage over them, to be more voluntarily poor, than the other could be rich.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of many who have despised and renounced all that is Temporal.

So evident is the baseness of temporal goods, and the mischiefs they occasion in human life so apparent, that many philosophers, without the light of faith or doctrine of the Son of God, were not ignorant of it; and many so deeply apprehended the importance, not only of contemning but of renouncing riches, that they lived most contentedly in great poverty and moderation. Aristides, although a principal person in Athens, was so affected to poverty, that he always went in a coarse broken garment, hungry and necessitated; and though he had a friend of great wealth, called Clinias, could never be persuaded to accept the least relief from him. It happened that this Clinias, being accused before the judges, to aggravate his other crimes, it was laid to his charge, that, being rich and able, he had not assisted his friend Aristides. Clinias, perceiving the judges to be highly in-

censed, and all men to cry out against his inhumanity, went to Aristides, and desired him to defend him from that false calumny, and to satisfy the judges and people, how often he had offered his wealth and fortunes to serve him, and that it was he himself who had still refused it. Aristides did so; and informed the judges of the innocence of his friend, and that it was his own desire, rather to live in his own poverty, than to brave it in the riches of another; saying withal, that rich men, who misspent their fortunes, were every where to be found, but few who passed their poverty and want of necessities with a generous mind: which so soon as he had declared, there was none present who envied not more the poverty and beggary of Aristides, than wished the wealth of Clinias. Zeno, as St. Gregory Nazianzen, and Seneca write, when news was brought him, that he had lost all, answered, "I see that fortune will have me, henceforward, possess the life of a philosopher with less difficulty." Valerius Maximus reports of Anaxagoras, that when he received the like news, all he said was, "If my goods had not perished I had." Cato reports of Crates, the Theban, that he flung his substance into the sea, saying, "It is better I drown you, than you me." Diogenes left all he had but a wooden dish; and by chance seeing one drink out of the hollow of his hand, broke that also. Laertius writes, that one scoffing at Æschines, a philosopher of Rhodes, said, "By the gods, Æschines, I am sorry to see thee so poor;" who answered, "By the same gods, I pity thee for having so great riches, which thou hast gotten with trouble, preservest with care, spendest with grief, keepest with nature, defendest with a thousand fears and passions; and, which is worst of all, where are thy riches, there is thy heart."

This point is singularly well handled by St. John Chrysostom (Chrys. lib. 2. con. Vituper. vitæ Monast.), in his second book against the despisers of a monastic life, which he dedicates to the philosophers of the gentiles, wherein he only uses such reasons, as may be apprehended by the light of nature; comparing Plato with Dionysius, Socrates with Archelaus, and Diogenes with Alexander; all of whom he makes much more glorious in their poverty, than the others in all their power and dominions. He relates also of Epaminondas, the Theban, who, being called to a certain council, could not come, because his cloak was washing, and he had no other to wear; and yet was more esteemed and revered by the Greeks, than any of their princes: from whence the holy doctor infers, that when there was no evangelical law, nor example of saints, yet in natural reason, and by natural testimonies, poverty was of high esteem and dignity. This being so, as certainly it is, what can we say, but that it is not poverty which we call so, but great and true riches?

SECTION II.

It is much to our confusion, that the gentiles should so far despise temporal goods, not being guided by that faith of eternity, which we profess, which gives so great a light to the discovery of that distance, which is between the one and the other, that many, whom it has enlightened with the beams of truth, have not only despised what the world holds in esteem, but have sought and embraced the contrary, rejoicing in poverty, ignominy and austerities, performing such actions to this effect, as have not fallen under imagination; whereof I shall here relate some admirable histories, and will begin with that of Mark of Alexandria, which we find written in certain Greek commentaries. (Ex Cod. M. S. Græc. Biblioth. Vide Rader. 2. P. opusc. sui Virid. c. 3. p. 79.) The abbot Daniel going with his disciples to Alexandria, beheld there, in company of other fools, this Mark, who went almost wholly naked, distributing what was given him, with many sottish gestures, amongst the other fools, his companions. The prudent abbot seriously remarking him, presently found by that spirit of trial, wherewith the Lord had endued him, that his folly was celestial wisdom, and, therefore, meeting him the next day in one of the public market-places, he endeavored to detain him, that he might speak with him; but he, still counterfeiting the fool, strove all he could to get loose, and run away from him, insomuch that the venerable old man was obliged to cry to those who were present, to assist him; who, seeing a monk struggle with a fool, cried out as fast to him, to beware of the madman. At last, some priests and ecclesiastics, who knew the abbot, passing by, asked him, what he had to do with the fool, and what he would with him; to whom he answered, "If you desire to know, bring him before the patriarch, and let him examine what he is." They did so; but Mark would neither answer nor speak a word, until the patriarch commanded him, under an oath, to declare who he was, and what were his intentions. Then the counterfeit fool, forced by this adjuration to leave off his dissembling, confessed he had been a grievous sinner, and had continued in dishonesty of life fifteen years; but by the goodness of God, repenting of his sins, he had resolved to perform as many years of penance, and had, in a place convenient for the purpose, spent eight of them; but desiring to pass the rest of them in greater rigor and austerity, he came to Alexandria, there to be treated in that manner, as they had seen him, in which he had now continued other eight years. Those who were present could not, out of tenderness, refrain from tears, and were much edified at the extraordinary ways by which the spirit of God recalls those whom he has chosen. But their admiration was much increased, when, the next day, abbot Daniel having sent his disciple to Mark to visit him, and to

advise him to return to the silence and solitariness of his cell, he found him dead, and that he had already rendered his soul to his Creator; to whose interment all the monks and priests of Alexandria, with an incredible number of the people, repaired, praising the Lord for the marvellous works of his providence, that whom he had chosen to be despised and contemned in life, he had in this manner preserved to be honored in death. Who sees not, in this admirable man, a high contempt and renunciation of those three kinds of goods, which the world so much esteems? He so despised riches that he had not a garment or rag to cover his nakedness. He so much contemned honor, that, to the end he might be more humbled and scorned, he conversed with fools, and made himself one of them; and so renounced all pleasures, that he persevered in perpetual fasts, forsaking and giving away his food amongst his companions.

Let us now relate another story of equal fortitude in the contempt of the world, but in a weaker sex. (Ex M. S. Græc. Hist. Patrum.) In Thabenna, upon the banks of the river Nile, in a monastery of three hundred virgins consecrated to God, there was amongst them one, called Isidora, scorned, despised and held for a fool by all the rest; who so nourished that opinion, and in such manner showed herself distracted, that she did not, for all this, forbear so to exercise the works of charity and humiliation towards the others, as if she were a slave to each one of them. Her employment was commonly in the kitchen, where she made clean and washed the dishes. The others upon occasion would sometimes buffet her, call her fool, sot and mad-woman; whereat she either held her peace, or laughed like some simple ninny; by which art, she freed herself from sitting with the rest in the refectory, not eating any thing but the scraps and remainder of others. She went always barefoot, with her head covered with some dirty cloth; and although she was the scorn of all, yet she was never heard to speak any thing in her own defence, or show the least resentment of any thing they did to her. At the same time there lived in Porphirito (Pallad. c. 42. de S. Pitir.), that great man of penance, and of equal fame and goodness, called Pitirum, to whom an angel appeared, and said, "Thou hast little reason to glory in thy so many years' austerities and observance of a religious life. Come, and thou shalt see a maid more holy than thyself. Go to the convent of the religious in Thabenna, amongst whom thou shalt find one with a diadem" (so the angel called that foul cloth, which the humble virgin, that she might be more despised, wore about her head). "Know (said the angel) that this maid is better than thyself; her patience is daily exercised by a number of women; she is despised, scorned and treated as if she were a dog, and yet permits not her thoughts to be troubled or distracted from God by any thing; and thou, being here alone, sufferest thy thoughts to

wander up and down the whole world." Which said, the angel departed; and the abbot Pitirum, at the same time, in compliance with what was commanded, went towards the place appointed, and, being so famed for sanctity, easily obtained leave to see the monastery; and the abbess and all the nuns came forth to enjoy the comfort of seeing so singular a man for sanctity, as also to receive the benediction of the bishop, who with one of his deacons accompanied him. The abbot not perceiving her amongst the rest, whom he sought for, demanded if none of the religious were wanting; and they answering, none, he replied, "It is impossible; for I see not her whom the angel of the Lord showed me." Whereupon they said, there only wanted one, who was a fool, and remained in the kitchen. The abbot commanded her instantly to be brought, which with much ado (she resisted all was possible) they did by force. The holy abbot instantly knowing her by that covering which the angel called a diadem, fell prostrate at her feet, saying, "Mother, I beseech thee bless me, and by thy holy prayers recommend me to our Lord." The other religious, astonished at the accident, said, "Take heed, father, what you do; this is a fool, and deprived of her senses." To whom the abbot said, "It is you are fools; this woman is wiser than you or I; and I would to God, that, at the day of judgment, I might be found in as happy a condition as she." The nuns, amazed at what they heard, kneeling at the feet of the abbot, demanded pardon for the injuries they had done to the servant of God, confessing their faults: one, the scoffing at her manner of clothing; another, her buffeting her; another, her flinging water in her face; another, her plucking her by the nose: in fine, none but had done her some affront or other. Whereupon, the abbot returned home much comforted, and the religious from thenceforward gave her such respect as was due to her virtues. But she, not enduring to be so much honored and esteemed, left the monastery (for then enclosure was not of obligation, as now it is), and went to some other place, where she might be more despised, at least her virtues not so much known. Who sees not here the world trodden under foot by this religious virgin, who lived with such content, humiliation and patience, in the midst of so much poverty, esteeming herself happy in being a slave, and scorned by all?

Admirable likewise is that story related by St. Gregory of Nyssen (Nyssen. in vita Thaumaturgi), of a certain philosopher, called Alexander; who being very beautiful of face, and of a goodly stature and presence, yet knowing, by the light of faith, which perfects philosophy, the vanity of the things of this world, and their danger, was resolved (despising himself and those gifts of nature) to live in labor and humility; and that his beautiful face might neither be occasion of sinning to himself nor others, he went to the city of Comana, and made himself a collier,

hoping, thereby, either to be altogether unknown, or at least forgotten. There he remained a long time, all tattered in apparel, and his face so black, that he seemed as if he were a coal himself; insomuch, that he was esteemed the most vile and despicable person of the whole city. It happened that (their bishop being at the same time dead) St. Gregory Thaumaturgus came thither, entreated by the citizens to bestow a bishop upon them; whereupon, the people presented to him the most noble and learned persons of their city, that he might out of that number make choice of whom he pleased. But the saint advised them, that, for so great a dignity as that of bishop, they should not only look upon those parts, which shine and appear glorious in the world, but upon virtue and sanctity; and that, therefore, they should also present to him others, although of a meaner condition. To whom some, in a scoffing way, replied, "If such people be fit to be made bishops, let us propose Alexander the collier;" it seeming to them, that there was not in all the city a meaner or more contemptible person than he. The bishop, moved by God, hearing him named, commanded him to be called, and made him bishop; our Lord causing him, who despised himself, to be honored by others, and placed him who was hidden and covered under his own lowness and humility, upon the candlestick of his church. And he after proved so excellent a bishop, and so perfect a follower of Christ, that he came to give his blood for his holy name, joining to the crown of the most holy life, the laurel of martyrdom.

No less wonderful was that contempt of the world in Simeon Sales (Evagrius, lib. 4. c. 33.), who living, as it is reported by Leontius and Evagrius, in great poverty and contempt, covered as much as he could his fasts, and long hours of prayer, which he spent with God; and to that end, when he was in public, endeavored so to behave himself, that all men might take him for a fool and a distracted madman, without the appearance of any virtue at all; so that he was often seen to enter taverns, and when, after his great fasts, his hunger caused him to eat, he would feed openly in the streets upon vile and coarse meats; and if any of understanding by chance looked more narrowly into his way of living, as suspecting that what he did might be to conceal his virtues, so soon as he had the least hint of it, he would presently depart to some other place, where he might be free from knowledge or esteem. It happened in a certain place where he was, that one finding a maid with child, and urging her to confess who had dishonored her, she, to conceal the offender, laid it upon Simeon the fool (for so they called him). He contradicted it not, but was contented, for Christ's sake, to bear the infamy, until God was pleased, that the true father of the child should be discovered; and, in the mean time, had so much charity towards her, who had laid that scandal upon him, that she being in great necessity, and infirm of her childbirth, he secretly brought her to

eat. But our Lord at last made him venerable to the whole world, who had made himself a fool, to gain the wisdom of heaven.

There are many also, who, to avoid the opinion of saints, and the honor which the people gave them, have done things extraordinary, and such as, in the eyes of men, seemed unworthy. St. John Climacus writes, that blessed Father Simeon, understanding that the governor of the province came to visit him, as a man famous for sanctity, took a piece of bread and cheese in his hand, and sitting at the door of his cell, ate in that ravenous and odd manner, that he seemed out of his wits; and the governor, conceiving him to be so, contemned him and returned home. There lived also in the inner part of the desert, a venerable old man, to whom a disciple had associated himself to learn his sanctity, and serve him. Upon the fame of his holy life, a certain man repaired to him, and, with tears in his eyes, besought him to come to his house and pray for his son, who was grievously sick. The hermit was content to go along with him, but the father of the child made haste before, that he might, in company of his neighbors, return and meet him, and so receive him with more honor. No sooner did the old man perceive him afar off in this equipage, but presently imagining what the matter meant, he stripped himself, and plunging into a river close by, began to bathe himself. His disciple, being much ashamed of this light action, wished the people to return home, for the old man was out of his wits; and going to his master, said, "Father, what is it thou hast done? all those who saw thee, thought thou wert possessed." To whom the holy man answered, "It is well; it is that which I desired."

SECTION III.

Amongst those who, with evangelical poverty, have embraced the contempt of the world, many have been great lords, princes, kings and emperors. Amongst the Almanes, their prince Charles is the most famous, who, being rich, and highly esteemed for his glorious actions, touched with the desire of heavenly things, left all to his brother Pepin, came to Rome, built a monastery upon mount St. Sylvester, and there remained some time a monk; but being much troubled with the many visits of the city, which was at hand, and his retirement disquieted, he left it, and went to mount Cassino, where he was received by Petronace, the abbot, and there lived with great joy and content; and profited so much in the exercise of humility, that it is written in the annals of the monastery, that the abbot appointed him to take care of the flock; which mean office he executed with as great cheerfulness, as if he had governed a kingdom as before; and one of his ewes by chance falling lame, he was seen to carry her home upon his shoulders, a king not disdaining so mean a service. We know

also in our Spain, that king Bamba, after he had reigned eleven years, and performed many brave actions, deprived the pirates of Africa of two hundred ships, and taken Paul, their king, who went against the king of France, prisoner; the last of his glorious actions was to close himself up in a monastery, where he lived seven years in great observance of religion, and died in the year 674; and was afterwards, in 786, imitated by Bermudus, king of Castile. There is scarce any province of Christendom, wherein some prince has not renounced his temporal kingdom for gaining the eternal; instructing us, that true greatness consists in humbling ourselves for Christ, and true riches in being poor, both in will and deed.

But not to enlarge myself too far, in recounting the stories of those many princes who have known how to exchange their temporal riches for an eternal kingdom, I will content myself with relating one, which includes many examples. Thomas de Cantiprato (*Cantiprat. l. 2. c. 10. p. 2. Hen. Gran. d. 5. Ex. 25.*) witnesses, that in his time died St. Matilda, daughter to the king of Scots, who had four brothers. The first being a duke, desiring to become poor for Christ's sake, left his wife and fortunes, and forsook his country. The second, bidding also farewell to the world, became a hermit. The third was an archbishop, who, quitting his bishopric, entered into the order of the Cistercians. The fourth, named Alexander, was the youngest of all his brothers, and being now arrived at sixteen years of age, his father would have compelled him to take the government of the kingdom upon him; which being understood by his sister Matilda, who was twenty years old, she called him aside, and spoke to him in this manner: "My most sweet brother, what is that thou meanest to do? Thy elder brothers have forsaken the things of the earth to gain those of heaven, and wilt thou, to gain this temporal kingdom, which they have left, lose that which is eternal, and thy own soul?" Alexander, his eyes becoming fountains of tears, answered her in this manner: "Sister, what is it you advise me? I am ready to execute your commands, without varying in the least circumstance." The holy maid, glad of his resolution, changed her habit, and both of them, secretly leaving their country, came into France. There she taught her brother how to order a dairy, milk cows and make cheeses, and afterwards found a way to have him received into a certain grange of the Cistercians, where he performed this office to such satisfaction of the monks, that in a short time he was admitted amongst them a lay-brother. His sister Matilda, seeing him thus placed, said one day to him, "Brother, certainly a great reward attends us from the Lord, for having thus left our parents and our country, for the love of him. But we shall receive a far greater, if, for the short time of our lives, we deprive ourselves even of this content of seeing one another; and that we so give ourselves over to that divine and sovereign Majesty, that we meet no more, until

we meet in heaven, where we shall see and converse one with another, in true and eternal comfort." Here the brother fell a-weeping, apprehending this as the greatest difficulty he had hitherto encountered, in the whole course of his life. But at last he mastered it, and they both parted, never to see one another more upon earth. The holy virgin went to a certain town, nine miles distant, where she lived retired in a little cottage, and sustained herself wholly by the labor of her hands, admitting neither presents nor alms. Her bed was the ground, or little better; she ate upon her knees, and in that posture, spent many hours in prayer; wherein she often was so rapt from her senses, that she neither heard the noise of thunder, nor perceived the flashes of lightning. Alexander was never known whilst he lived; but St. Matilda was, nine years before her death, and therefore attempted often to have left the place, but was so strictly watched, she could not. She wrought many miracles, both during her life, and after death. A certain monk, sick of an imposthume in his breast, offered up his prayers at the tomb of Alexander; and to him the servant of God appeared, more resplendent than the sun, adorned with two most beautiful crowns; one of which he wore upon his head, the other he carried in his hand; and being asked by the monk, what those two crowns signified, he answered, "This which I bear in my hands, is given me for that temporal kingdom which I forsook upon earth; the other, on my head, is that which is commonly given to all the saints of heaven. And that thou mayst give credit to what thou hast seen in this vision, thou shalt find thyself, according to thy faith, cured of thy infirmity." In this manner God honors those who humble themselves for his glory.

CHAPTER IX.

The Love which we owe to God ought so to fill our Souls, that it leave no Place or Power to love the Temporal.

WE have already produced sufficient motives and reasons, to breed in us a contempt of the things of this world, and to wean our affections from them, as well for being in themselves vile, transitory, mutable, little and dangerous, as for that the Son of God has done and suffered so much, to the end we should despise them. I will only now add, for the conclusion of this matter, that, though they were of some real worth or value (as they are not), yet for all this, we ought not to love them, since so great is that love and affection, which is due from us to God, that it ought so fully to fill and possess our hearts, that it leave no room for any other affection than itself. For if it were commanded in the law, when men had not the obligation which we now have (the Son of God not having then died for our redemption), that

we should love him with all our heart, all our soul, and all our powers ; how are we to love him, when our debt is so much greater, and that we have a further knowledge of his divine goodness ? If, then, there ought to be no place for any love but this, how can we now turn our eyes to the creature, or set our hearts upon it, when a million of hearts are not sufficient for our Creator ? There is no one title for which God is amiable, but upon that title we owe him a thousand wills, a thousand loves, and all that we are, or can be ; what do we then owe him for all together ? Consider his benefits, his love, his goodness, and thou shalt see, that though thou hadst as many hearts as there are sands upon the sea-shore, or atoms in the air, all were not capable of that great love which is due to him. How canst thou, then, divide this one heart which thou hast, amongst so many creatures ? Consider, also, the multitude and greatness of his divine blessings, and deal but with God, as one man does with another. If we say of human benefits, that gifts break rocks, how comes it that divine benefits do not move a heart of flesh ? And if, as Solomon says, those who have gifts, steal the hearts of the receivers, how comes it, that God robs not thee of thy soul, who not only gives these gifts, but himself for a gift ? Consider the benefits thou didst receive in thy creation ; they were as many as thou hast members of thy body, or faculties of thy soul. Consider those of thy conservation ; thou hast received as many as there are distinct natures in heaven and in earth. The elements, stars, and the whole world, were created for thy preservation, without which thou couldst not subsist. Look upon the benefits of thy redemption ; they are as many as are the evils of hell from which they have freed thee. Look upon those of thy justification ; they are as many as the sacraments which Christ has instituted, and the examples which he has left thee. Think what thou owest him for having made thee a Christian, pardoned thee so often, and given thee still fresh grace to renew thee. All these, and a thousand other benefits and obligations, demand and sue for thy love. And not only these benefits from God, but even those from men, cry out to thee to love him ; for there is no benefit which thou receivest from man, but comes from God. On all parts, then, and for all things, thou art obliged to love God ; for it is he who does thee good in all, and is worth to thee more than all. How comes it, then, that, since he has done all this for us, we yet think not what we are to do for him, nor how we shall express our thankfulness for such and so great benefits ? David was troubled with this care, when he said, " What shall I return unto the Lord, for all which he hath given me ? " And yet the Lord had not then given him the body and blood of his Son, nor had his Son then been born or died for him. Since, then, he has done all this for us, why do we not study how we may be grateful for such infinite and unspeakable mercies ? But what can we

return, which we have not received? Let us deliver him back our souls, hearts and bodies; looking upon ourselves henceforward, as on a thing not ours, but his; acknowledging that we owe him more than what we are or can do. So shall we not debase our love, by placing it upon creatures.

If we shall then consider the infinite love which God bears us, we shall find that we have no love left to bestow upon any thing but him, no, not upon ourselves. To know truly the greatness of this divine love, we are to suppose, that true and perfect love consists much in action, but is most apparent in patience and suffering, and also in communication of its proper goods to those whom it loves. Sec, then, how great is his love, who has wrought such stupendous works for thee, as are his incarnation and thy redemption; and continues still to this hour working for thy good, after a thousand ways, in all his creatures; making the corn grow which is to feed thee, the wool to increase which is to clothe thee, supports the sun which is to enlighten thee, draws waters from the veins of the earth to quench thy thirst, and in every thing still operates for thee. Consider how he gives a being to the elements, life to plants, sense to beasts, understanding to angels, and all to thee, working in thee alone all that he works in the other degrees of nature. How apparent, then, is the love of God in his works, who does so great things for the good of man, who deserves to be forsaken by him, and reduced to nothing! Consider, then, the excess of love in his patience, who has endured such cruel torments, and so painful a death for thee, and has borne with thee as often as thou hast offended him. And if patience be a trial of love, where shall we find so great an example? How excessive were that love, if a king, who, after his vassal had a thousand times attempted to murder him, should not only pardon, but continue still to favor and enrich him with his own rents and revenues! Who would not be amazed at such a love, and think that king infatuated? O goodness and longanimity of God, who suffers us a thousand times to turn again, and crucify thee, our Redeemer, the King of glory, and art still silent! Behold also his love, in communicating all the good he has to us. The Father delivers up his only Son, the Son his body and blood for us, and they both together send the Holy Ghost, by whom we are by grace made partakers of the divine nature. See if a more great, more real, or more tender love than this can be imagined, wherein he shares with us all he has, and gives us all he can. And if love be to be paid with love, what love dost thou owe him? See if thou hast an affection yet free, to be employed upon any but thy lover, and thy God. Requite, then, this excess of good-will, by having no other will but his, and answer his love with a love like his, of works and patience. Our Lord is not content we should only love him with our tongues, but reprehends those who cry to him, "Lord, Lord," and do not what he commands; for even good

words, if they want works, are condemned as false and feigned. Let us love him then in earnest ; let us suffer for him, and communicate with him all we have. Let us not think to come off with this love *gratis* ; it is to cost us all that is ours. If we love our God truly, who so much loved us, we must resolve to lose honors, wealth and pleasure, in serving and requiting him.

Above all, if we consider him to be God, who is *infinitely* beautiful, good, wise, powerful, eternal, immense, immutable, there is no heart possible, which can equal the love which he deserves for any one of those divine attributes. What shall, then, his whole infinity deserve, which eminently contains all the beauties and perfections of his creatures, either real or imaginable ? For all are but as a drop in respect of an immense ocean ; all depend upon God, who so communicates his beauties and perfections to the creatures, that they still remain in himself, after a more excellent manner, and in such sort distributes them, that he parts not from them, but unites them all in one simple perfection ; from whence, as from a fountain, all that is good flows, and is yet still in the original, in a more high and transcendent manner. And if men (as the wise man says), admiring the beauty of some creatures, adored them as gods, let them hence understand, how beautiful is the Lord of all things, since he, who made *them*, is the Author and Father of beauty ; and if they wonder at their force and virtue in their operations, let them know, that he who made them is more powerful than they ; and by the beauty and greatness of the created, let the understanding climb to the knowledge of the Creator, and hence collect, that if the effect be good, the cause must needs be so too ; for nothing can give what it has not ; and, therefore, he who made things so beautiful and so good, cannot but be most beautiful, and most excellently good himself. So that if the imagination should join in one piece all the good, and all the perfection of all creatures possible or imaginable, yet God were infinitely more perfect and more beautiful than that.

From hence it follows, that as God is infinitely perfect and beautiful, so he must be infinitely amiable ; and if infinitely amiable, we are to love him with an infinite love : so as if the capacity of our heart were infinite, it were wholly to be employed in loving him. How can we then, since our heart is limited, and the object infinite, spare any part of it for the things of this life ? Besides, such is the loveliness of God, that we are not to love ourselves but because he loves us ; and if we are not to love ourselves but for his sake, how are we diverted to love other things for their own sake ? O infinite God ! how do I rejoice that thou art so good, so perfect, so beautiful, the source and original of all beauty and perfection, as that I ought not only to withdraw my love and affection from all other creatures, but even from myself, and place it wholly upon thee, from whom my being, and all the

good I have, are derived, as the beams from the sun, or water from the fountain ! For as the condensation of the rays, according to a mystic doctor, depends more upon the sun, than upon themselves, and the current of the stream more from the fountain than itself ; in such manner, the good of man depends wholly upon God, who is the spring and fountain of all his good and perfection : from whence it follows, that man, when he relies upon himself, is sure to fall, and when he loves himself, loses himself ; but flying and abhorring himself, preserves himself ; according to what is written in the holy Gospel, " He who loves his life, shall lose it ; and he who hates it in this world, shall gain it for ever." Hence it comes, that we are now no more to look upon ourselves as upon a thing of our own, but only God's, depending, both in our spiritual and corporal being, from that infinite ocean of being and perfection. Hence the soul, finding itself now free and unfettered, flies to God with all its forces and affections, not finding any thing to love and please it but in him, in whom the beauty and perfection of all creatures are contained with infinite advantages. When one has once arrived to this state, how dissonant and various soever his works be, the end which he intends is still the same, and he ever obtains what he intends, if, shutting his eyes to all creatures, as if they were not, he looks at nothing but God, and how to please his divine goodness, and that only for itself. It may be, that looking at the particular ends of each work, our actions may be in several conditions ; sometimes they are in beginning, sometimes in the midst, sometimes in the end, and sometimes by impediments and cross accidents, which happen, they acquire not what they aim at ; but look upon the intention of him who works, and they are still in their end : for in what condition soever the work be, he who does it with this intention, only to please God, is ever in his end, which no bad success or contradiction can hinder. According to that which has been said, it is a great matter by divine light to have arrived at this knowledge, that all goods and gifts descend from above, and that there is an infinite power, goodness, wisdom, mercy and beauty, from whence these properties, which are here below participated by the creatures with such limitation, are derived. It is a great matter to have discovered the sun by his rays, and guiding ourselves by the stream, to have arrived at the fountain's head, or to have found the centre, where the multiplicity of created perfections meet and unite in one. There our love shall rest, having nothing further to seek ; and this is to love God with all the heart, all the soul, all the mind, and all the powers. And as those who arrive at this happy state have no other care, no other thought, than to do the will of God here upon earth, with the same perfection it is done in heaven ; so they have no other desires, than by leaving earth to enter heaven, there by fulfilling wholly the divine will,

to supply what was defective upon earth. Nothing detains them there but the will of God ; they having nothing begun which is not ended ; they are ever prepared ; all their business is despatched, like those servants who are always expecting their lord, and still ready to open the door, when he shall call. Let us, then, prepare ourselves, by withdrawing our love from all that is temporal and created, and placing it upon our Creator, who is eternal ; let us love him, not with a delicate and an effeminate love, but with a strong and manly affection ; such a one as will support any weight, overcome any difficulty, and despise any interest, rather than be separated from our beloved, break his laws, or offend him, though never so lightly. Let this love be *strong as death*, that it may look death in the face, and not fly from it ; which when it suffers, it conquers. Let thy fire be so enkindled, that if whole rivers of tribulations fall upon it, they may be but like drops of water falling upon a furnace, which the flames drink up and consume, and are not quenched, but quickened by them. Be above thyself, and above all that is below ; and if the world offer thee all it is mistress of, to despoil thee of this love, reject and despise it as nothing.

To this love it belongs to accommodate one's self to poverty, not to repine at hunger, nakedness, cold or heat, which as companions go along with it ; to suffer injuries meekly ; to bear sickness and infirmities patiently ; not to be dismayed in persecutions ; to endure temptations with longanimity ; to bear the burdens of our neighbors cheerfully ; not to be tired with their thwart conditions ; not to be angry at their neglects, nor overcome by their ingratitude ; in spiritual dryness not to leave our ordinary devotions, and in consolations and spiritual gusts, not to forbear our obligations. Finally, that we may say with St. Paul, " Who shall separate us from the charity of Christ ? tribulation ? or distress ? or famine ? or nakedness ? or danger ? or persecution ? or the sword ? I am sure, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers ; neither things present, nor things to come ; neither might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

THE END.



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